BUSINESS / B1
PNB turnaround: No more peaks and troughs

NEWS / A2
Nograles says DAR budget can cover CARP till December

SPORTS / A27
Celtics survive late Laker rally, take 2-0 lead in NBA Finals

LIFESTYLE / C1
'Aspin' Poypoy competes with Malinois, Labradors

'Wonder boy' never runs out of quotations

By Madonna Virola
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CITY OF CALAPAN—Remember the "wonder boy" from Mindoro?

Now 7 years old, Jeli

WONDER BOY/A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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It's back to school, error-filled books

Crusader says DepEd playing hocus-pocus

(Second of a series)

STUDENTS RETURNING to school today will find the same error-filled textbooks that a self-styled crusader against "sick books" has been trying to get rid of the past several years, but sadly failed.

T-TEAM Report

Fernando del Mundo
Chief
EDUCATION

On May 19, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus decided to act on one set of textbooks that Antonio Calipjo Go has waged war on, issuing an order to bureau and regional directors, division and city superintendents and heads of private elementary schools.

"After a review and evaluation by the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) of the series Simply Science in the Next Century Grades 1 to 6 (reprint edition 2007) and Harnessing English Arts Today Grades 1 to 6 (Reprint Edition 2007) of Phoenix Publishing House Inc., the same were found to contain major errors [conceptual errors, factual errors, misleading, or wrong di-

IT'S BACK/A20

BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROTESTS
Student activists in a mock school bus raise a familiar litany of problems besetting the country's educational system during a rally along Espana Street in Manila. Their teachers staged their own protest, too. (See photo on Page A22.)

ERR MACIAS

Nuggets of wisdom lost in translation

A LIFE-SIZE IMAGE OF THE Virgin Mary stands on the small campus of Marian School of Quezon City run by Antonio Calipjo Go, its academic supervisor.

Inside a combined bookstore and library, where Go holds office, the walls are adorned with framed newspaper articles and full-page advertisements under a sign proclaiming them as specimens of "textbook hara-kiris."

A younger-looking Go smiles on a magazine cover that calls him the "Lone Textbook Ranger."

Go greets a visitor in his small office, where Brahms waltz soothingly from a CD player.

The 57-year-old Go speaks softly, but as he warms up to his subject he becomes a smoldering volcano about to erupt.

He talks about a meeting the Department of Education called last month to discuss for the first time his 3-year-old complaint about errors in Science and English textbooks published by Phoenix Publishing House Inc. and used in some 200 private schools.

Go thinks the meeting was a setup, that he walked into an "ambush." Phoenix sent a battery of lawyers who dredged up

GO sees cover-up or whitewash.

MASSETS/A20

Classrooms, chairs didn't reach poor schools—COA

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IT'S NOT JUST A CASE OF MISMAnes priorities, but also of mismanagement.

The Commission on Audit (COA) has reported that because of the inept allocation of resources, funds that were meant for public schools in the country's most depressed areas instead went to those that had the least need for classrooms, tables and chairs.

In its latest audit report on the Department of Education, the COA disclosed that "acute classroom shortages" in 2,929 schools were not addressed for year. Instead, it said that construction projects worth P937.736 million were implemented in 1,329 school sites that did not need them.

The 2,929 schools had been identified as being first priority under the government's regular school building program approved by the school division superintendents and district engineers of the Department of Public Works and Highways from 2004 to 2007.

The 1,329 schools that instead benefited from the program had been classified under the second, third, and fourth categories in the 2004-07 priority listings, ranked the 2007 COA report.

The DepEd yearly allocates funds for the construction of classrooms in schools that badly need them in accordance with the Ramas Law (Republic Act No. 7880), which provides for the fair and equitable allo-

CLASSROOMS/A21

Gov't warned on reopening nuclear plant

By TJ Burgonio

A LAWMAKER YESTERDAY CAUtioned Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes against rushing to reopen the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP), saying that the country lacks a "culture of safety."

Rodolfo Goloy, House senior deputy minority leader, said the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) recommendations that the country rehabilitate the $2.3-billion nuclear plant in Bataan should be studied by a "competent team" in the Department of Energy.

"But I don't see anyone at the DOE right now," he said in a phone interview. "We should not depend on those who are to the business of expanding nuclear plants."

Goloy said that even if the safety measures were all in place, "we have not achieved a culture of safety that is observed in Japan, the United States and Western Europe."

Reyes said on Saturday that the government was seriously studying the

GOV'T WARNED/A13

EDITA Burgos holds a picture of her missing son Jonas.

Search goes on for victims of 'dirty war'

SEVERAL MEN, WIDELY SUSpected to be members of an Army "black squad," abducted Edita Burgos' son while he ate lunch at a shopping mall in Quezon City last year.

More than a year after the abduction, many believe Jonas Burgos is dead. His mother has heard from her own sources that Jonas was badly tortured but she refuses to accept that her son is dead. "It makes the search easier," Edita says.

Across the country, other parents are adopting a similar stoic approach.

Hundreds of activists have been gunned down or abducted over the past seven years in what is viewed internationally as a "dirty war" by the Philippine military

SEARCH/A11

High oil prices put pressure on gov't to ease people's pain

By the Business Staff

(Second of two parts)

AT THE OPENING OF PUBLIC schools today, students will pay higher transport fares despite enjoying a 20-percent discount.

SPECIAL REPORT

The minimum jeepney and bus fares were raised by 7 percent to 15 percent on May 21 because of soaring fuel prices.

From $10 a barrel in 1999, oil prices climbed to $95 but year and to a record $138.50 on June 7, raising the cost of practically everything.

Prices of food, which accounts for about half the consumer basket, shot up 14.3 percent in the Philippines in May. The price of rice rose 31.7 percent.

Economists expect the inflation rate to rise this month to the double-digit level, the first since 1999.

A recent Asian Development Bank study said that every 10-percent increase in nonfood prices, such as fuel and utilities, would drive an additional 1.7 million people into poverty.

The global oil price shock is also raising the cost of borrowing money, which threatens to curb business and consumer spending.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) had to raise its overnight borrowing rate by 25 basis points on June 5 to fight

HIGH OIL/A1

Oil eases but still near $140

OIL PRICES HELD NEAR $140 per barrel on Monday after rocketing to a one-day price gain in the history of the market amid jitters about supplies, growing global demand and a weak US dollar.

By midday in Europe, light, sweet crude for July delivery eased to $1.21 to $137.33 a barrel. The contract was volatile, trading between $135.27 and $138.25 so far in the session.

Crude futures made their biggest single-day jump ever Friday, soaring nearly $11 for the day to $138.54 a barrel, a rise of more than 8 percent that battered stocks on Wall Street. That came after an increase on Thursday of almost $5.50, taking oil futures more than 13 percent higher in just two days, nearly a record on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

"We're likely to see some pullback ... and a choppy period of

OIL EASES/A10

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 FOUR DIGIT

9 9 | 5 1 1 | 6

LUCKY PICK

5 5 6 | 6 5 0

MEGALOTTO 6/45

6 8 20 36 39 44

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Nograles: DAR can pay for CARP

Speaker says agency has until December to buy land for farmers

By TJ Burgonio

SPEAKER PROSPERO NOGRALES IS OPEN TO authorizing the Department of Agrarian Reform to use its budget to acquire and distribute land to farmers if Congress fails to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

With a few days left before Friday's adjournment, Congress is unlikely to approve the measure seeking to extend CARP's land acquisition and distribution (LAD) component by five years from today.

Nograles said yesterday he was willing to enter a joint resolution with Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. authorizing the DAR to use its budget for the LAD up to Dec. 31, if necessary, in case the extension bill is not passed.

"Yes, of course," he said in a text message when asked about this.

Nograles, however, said that to his view, the DAR can legally use its budget for LAD up to the end of the year even if both chambers of Congress fail to hammer out a bill extending it.

"It's not needed because the budget is up to December 2008 which DAR can use," he said, adding: "The Department of Agrarian Reform is not abolished by our passing CARP."

DAR officials had said they were banking on the Senate and the House to authorize Congress to use the LAD budget up to the end of the year, pending approval of the extension measure.

Looming nonextension

Nonapproval of the measure would hobble the distribution of at least 1.3 million hectares of agricultural land, including 200,000 hectares this year, officials said.

In view of the looming nonextension of LAD, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño proposed that Congress reallot DAR's budget "to allay fears that the program will evaporate the extension bill."

"This will give us six more months from July to December to work out the approval of a genuine agrarian reform bill," he said, referring to an alternative bill that merges CARP's flawed components.

The fate of the proposed law hangs in the balance in both chambers.

The Senate committee on agrarian reform has yet to report out its hearings on the measure, purportedly to a gallery debate.

Uphill battle

Administration Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said even a special session could not help.

The House, for its part, faces an uphill battle in getting the bill approved on its second and third or final reading today or tomorrow against the strong opposition of landed lawmakers.

Nueva Ecija Rep. Eduardo Rosato Joson, one of the authors, said he doubted this would be approved unless the chamber "cracks the whip" on party mates opposed to the bill.

Death of CARP rally

Nograles himself admitted that he could muster the votes needed to get this passed by tomorrow, the last session day, if "unwelcome are accepted by the sponsors."

He, however, said: "I'm not giving up in the House. I will do my best."

Incoming Arroyo-ally party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said farmers from Southern Tagalog, Bicol region, Central Luzon and northern Luzon will march CARP's death in a rally at Chino Roces (Mandaluyong) Bridge in Manila today.

Mariano said the program had failed miserably because it catered to the interests of big landlords and foreign agro-corporations who want to keep their monopoly and control of vast tracts of land.

CBCP wants extension

The president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Angel Lagdameo, has again urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to call a special session for House Bill No. 4077 to extend the life of the 20-year old CARP by five years.

The CBCP will hold a special Mass for farmers and other CARP stakeholders today at St. Michael's Church near Malacañang.

Lipamandans for the restoration of the agrarian reform law as well as government officials and nongovernmental organizations are expected to join the religious community in the gathering. With a report from Kristine L. Alave

'Buffer fund' to ease Asian food crisis, group says

By Marlon Ramos

LEADERS FROM SOUTHEAST Asian nations must work together to set up a "buffer fund" to alleviate the impact of the current food crisis and prevent hoarding and profiteering by unscrupulous groups said Monday.

In a news briefing in Quezon City, leaders of Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) said the fund "should be established as soon as possible" to avert a repeat of the crisis.

The group, composed of officials of various political groups from European and Asian countries, blamed the food and fuel shortage on "globalization" which they said has led to increasing Asian right violations in many developed and developing nations.

Charles Santiago, a Malaysian parliamentarian and chairman of the International steering committee of AEPF, said the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), being the most influential group in the region, must institute measures to lessen the impact of the food crisis on marginalized sectors, which will suffer the most from the economic downturn.

The setting up of a buffer fund could be one way of keeping prices from skyrocketing, said Santiago, director of the Malaysian group Monitoring Sustainability of Globalization.

"In the spirit of solidarity, the buffer fund must be created to reduce the prices of rice, corn and other goods which could be used as a basis for exchange among countries," he said.

Santiago said the use of a buffer fund proved to be successful in keeping the supply and price of cereals in Latin America.

"I think it's just a matter of time before people get fed up and start protesting in the streets because their money can no longer buy enough food," he said.

Santiago said the buffer system will work like a "free control," similar to what the Mekong countries of Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam suggested.

"But unlike what Thailand wanted, it will not be a cartel. The buffer fund will (showcase) the leading export products of each nation so we can avoid monopolies by the supply and pricing of commodities," he said.

Santiago, meanwhile, said speculators and fund managers of multinational companies should also be held liable for the unprecedented rise in the prices of grains and oil.

After speculating on real estate and money markets in the late 1990s, fund managers have started to speculate on agricultural products, like rice, corn and soy beans, to bring about the unusual price increases in the past few years, he said.

"Once they push the prices of these commodities very high, the companies of these fund managers earn a lot. This is what happened during the Asian financial crisis more than 10 years ago," he said.

The group held a three-day seminar in Quezon City over the weekend to build their unity ahead of the meeting of their counterparts at the AEPF annual forum in Beijing, China, and the Asean leaders meeting in December.

Power consumers won't get full refund, says watchdog

By Abigail L. Ho

BUYERS OF RESIDENTIAL RECKLESS CONsumers will soon be getting their money deposits back, the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore) denounced the Energy Regulatory Commission's recently issued refund guidelines as "half-hearted" and biased in favor of the utility firms.

In a statement issued over the weekend, Nasecore president Pete Ilagan said consumers would not get the full refund due them because the interest on the deposits will be computed on simple instead of compounded rates. The computation scheme is the Energy Commission's way to cushion the blow to the electricity companies.

"ERC's mandate is to issue electricity rates and to lean in favor of consumers, but by not ordering a compounded interest rate on the deposit refunds, ERC is once again limiting the public perception that it is a mouth of the hypocrisy," Ilagan said, referring to the family that controls Manila Electric Co.

As of end-2007, Meralco's accumulated meter deposits, plus interest, stood at P2.7 billion.

Under ERC rules, residential and commercial consumers who paid their meter deposits prior to the effectivity of the Energy Regulatory Board conversion on Sept. 22, 1993, would be entitled to interest of 6 percent a year.

Those who paid their meter deposits after the issuance of the IRR resolution and up to the day prior to the effectivity of the Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers and the Distribution Services and Open Access Rules (DSOAR), on the other hand, would enjoy 10 percent interest per annum.

Electricity users who paid from the effectivity of the Magna Carta and the DSOAR up to the day before the implementation of the refund would be entitled to interest of 6 percent a year.

"Post's highly discriminatory against the pre-1993 Meralco consumers. We don't get the point since the longer your money is being used by another, the more return in the form of interest you should get," Ilagan said.

Give folk promos, telcos urged

By Norman Bordadora

THE CHAIR OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE on infrastructure and communication yesterday urged telecommunications companies to launch new promotional campaigns to help consumers deal with the rising cost of food and fuel.

Committee chairman Rep. Joseph Santiago said the (text) promos would be the industry's response to President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for burden-sharing during difficult times.

He said he had already received indications from telcos that they would commence launch new promos, particularly those using pre-paid systems.

"Based on the feedback we obtained from industry players, they will definitely launch new promotional services shortly, with the intention of providing as consumers more value for our money," Santiago said.

"We definitely welcome the additional promotional activities, which should allow consumers to continue to enjoy highly affordable and reliable text messaging... while other public services are getting costlier," he added.

Santiago is former chair of the National Telecommunications Commission.

He said it has become the NTC mandate to call on telecommunications companies to come up with more policy directions, it can be questioned by the courts under the liberalized industry.

"We must stress that our role is totally limited to telecommunications matters, the NTC can always try to force service providers to do this and do that. However, based on my experience at the NTC, service providers can just as easily go to court and challenge any new NTC rules," Santiago said.

"And while the dispute is pending in court, the relief that we all want to extend to consumers would be lost," he added.

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High oil prices put pressure on gov't to ease people's pain

From page A1

inflation, which rose to a nine-year high of 9.8 percent in May.

The BSP could increase the current 5.25 percent overnight rate by 50 points for the remaining part of 2008 through mid-2009, according to Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Because of the soaring cost of imported crude, the country's oil import bill will grow, which will cause the trade deficit to widen and the peso to weaken against the US dollar.

The peso gained 39 percent against the dollar last year, making it Asia's best performing currency, but it lost 5.6 percent so far this year.

International reserves

Victor Wolpedias, Union Bank of the Philippines president, said the economy of a $200-a-barrel crude oil meant that the country's import bill would be $28 billion a year.

The projected import bill, based on an estimated annual oil consumption of 146 million barrels, would be equivalent to more than half of the $56% gross international reserves of about $37 billion. The country imports about 95 percent of its oil needs.

"That will be putting us into an extreme stress because oil is now being traded as a financial asset," Wolpedias said. "It's no longer dependent on purely supply and demand."

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said demand would be affected if prices go up further.

Supply problems

Mohd Abdla, an economist at University of Asia and the Pacific, said the skyrocketing oil prices were largely due to supply-related problems rather than growing demand.

While global demand for oil is increasing, especially by China and India, oil-producing countries have excess capacity that is enough to meet demand, according to Abdla.

"That is, there is spare capacity (producers' ready ability to pump out more oil), but the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) chose to maintain production levels," he said.

About 86 million barrels are traded daily but a bigger volume could be sold if Opec supplies spare capacity, he said.

Abdla said Opec's spare capacity was currently estimated at 2.6 million barrels a day and was projected to grow to 4 million by next year.

Global demand to slow

High oil prices may not be sustained for long, according to the economist. Abdla said a number of refineries in various parts of the globe, including China, would help increase oil supply next year. Meanwhile, slowdown of the US economy was expected to temper global demand.

"Increase in supply and slowdown in demand would, hopefully, result in lowering of oil prices in the near future," Abdla said.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said that should oil prices shoot up to $200 a barrel, the BSP alone could not address the situation.

"It is for the whole government to equip ourselves with measures to respond," Guinigundo said. "We can set up our own early-warning system and we can formulate monetary policy on the basis of an inflation process driven by a $200-per-barrel oil price, but this is also a concern for the general public."

Help people cope

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Augusto Santos said Abdla agreed that measures had to be taken to help people cope with rising prices of oil.

"The government is giving a lot of subsidies (such as through cheap rice sold by the National Food Authority) to help ease the impact of high oil prices on consumers," Santos said. "Economic managers are also discussing proposed measures to lower prices of electricity."

Abdla said households should focus on the use of energy-saving devices and people must be conscious of the electricity consumption of their household appliances.

Alternative fuel

"Compact fluorescent lamps, for example, should be used rather than incandescent lamps because the former consumes much less electricity," Abdla said.

The production of devices that use alternative fuel like the motor that runs tricycles for hire should also be promoted, according to Abdla.

Peter Mahaboonsr, Guangxi Yuchaigaming Anti (an) gasgenset director, said higher oil prices should affect the prices of farm inputs such as oil-based urea fertilizer and transportation.

As it is, world prices of grains have reached record highs due to increased costs of farm inputs.

Wholesale and prices of urea fertilizer have reached about P1,800 per 50-kilogram bag in May, more than double last year's P873 a bag.

He said any increase in the prices of oil would also have an impact on farming because the equipment used for basic preparation such as tractors run on petroleum products.

Organic fertilizer

To cushion the impact of higher fertilizer costs, the Department of Agriculture is encouraging the use of organic and chemical fertilizers.

"We're continuing to strengthen the production of organic fertilizer to avoid using farm wastes," Mendoza said. "We're actually encouraging the locals to produce their own organic fertilizers to lessen the impact of the high costs of farm inputs."

A hectare of land needs at least six to seven bags of fertilizers—two bags of urea, four bags of nitrogen-phosphorous-potassium and a bag of muriate of potash—to ensure that crops get the needed nutrients.

Norlito Ocampo, executive director of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, said international prices of fertilizer were likely to go up because the demand for the input would grow, given the expansion of planting for rice and biofuel feedstock, which includes corn and sugarcane.

Natural gas stations

In the land transport sector, some groups are pushing for the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Department of Energy to press their concerns now pending approval of a proposal for alternative fuels such as liquefied natural gas (LNG).

With taxis already using LPG, operators of jeepneys and buses are keen on using LNG which came from the Malampaya fields off Palawan.

"We want long-term solutions and then bikes would not really solve the problem," said Vigor Mendoza, president of the transport party-list group 1-UTAK.

1-UTAK represents jeepney and bus associations that comprise about 90 percent of the country's road transport sector.

"We must have alternatives so that we are not at the mercy of the oil market, which we cannot control," Mendoza said.

The militant group Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nasionalista (Piston) is asking for price controls, at least in the local market.

Budget deficit

Magpantay Gonzales, an economist at New York-based think tank GlobalSource, said the possibility of continued increases in the world oil price would keep expectations on inflation high and further push up interest rates.

"In terms of spending, there is going to be greater pressure on the government to provide measures to ease the pain of higher prices, such as through various subsidies, which hopefully will not undermine its fiscal position as fiscal developments will potentially worsen pressure on (interest) rates," Gonzales said.

But so far, Gonzales said the impact on the budget deficit of government subsidies (on rice and fuel) remained manageable, as spending for these subsidies were being done outside the national government's budget.

Rice, transport subsidies

Raul T. Concepcion, chair of Consumer and Oil Price Watch, expressed support for the Department of Social Work and Development's Ahon Pamilyang Pinoy program, which gives poor families access cards to allow them to buy government-subsidized rice.

He urged business organizations and civic groups to adopt a barangay along the lines of the Ahon Pamilyang Pinoy program.

Jesus L. Arranza, Federation of Philippine Industries president, said his group was not averse to giving rice and transport subsidies to minimum-wage earners.

Arranza also proposed that socialized pricing mechanisms be implemented to protect the poor from feeling the full brunt of price increases.

He said increases in the price of 11-kg LPG cylinders, which households use, should be smaller than those for 50-kg cylinders that businesses use.

"Businesses like restaurants can pass on to other people—their customers—the cost of increasing LPG prices, but a household cannot do that," he said. —Doris C. Dumlao, Michaela V. Reyes, Amy R. Remo, Riny T. Obcemea and Ramon H. Domingo

Guthrie Jensen
Y28 years
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BI check-in rule draws fire

MINOS AQUINO Bureau of Immigration (BI) Airport Service Chief Marcelino Libanan said the 45-minute cutoff was based on recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

"But that's not what the law rule means. What law requires is that both departing and arriving passengers should leave gates through all airport processes—security screening, check-in or baggage retrieval and immigration check—within 45 minutes," Aquino said.

So far no passenger has been stopped or from boarding because of the new rule, a check with the BI office at the airport yesterday showed, Steve Quimsando

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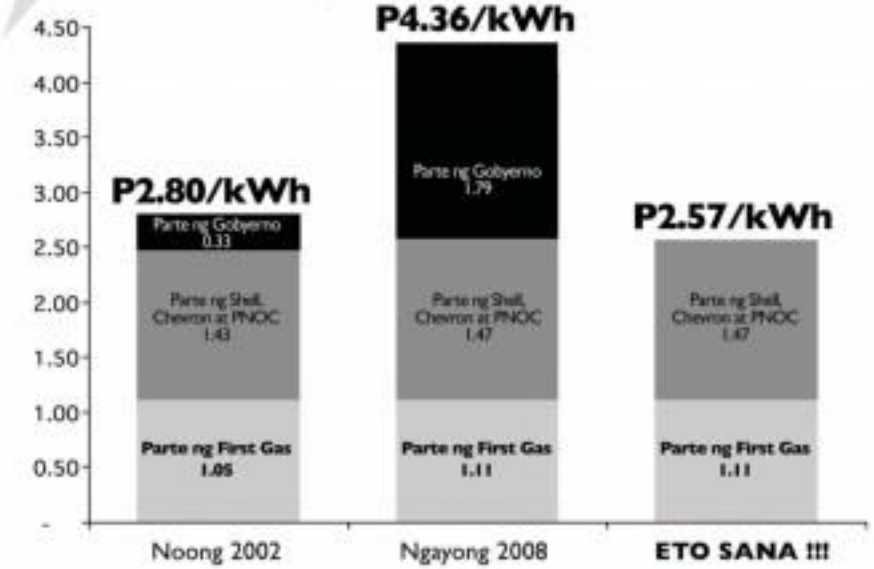

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Comelec needs new commissioners now, GMA told

By Kristine L. Alave

THE COMMISSION ON ELEC- tions chief said a poll watchdog have urged President Mesapa- gat-Arroyo to fill the three vacancies in the Comelec this month, saying the poll body needs all the help it can get as elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) nears.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo said he hoped President Arroyo would appoint three commissioners this month.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye earlier announced that Malacañang would make the appointments in June. He did not say, however, how many commissioners the President would appoint.

"I hope she will appoint three. It is difficult for us," Melo said. With only three commissioners, he said the members are quizzed by a quorum—Melo said they would not afford to be absent from en banc discussion.

Melo said he heard some rumors being floated for the vacancies but, so far, he had not been notified of any Palace deliberations.

Meanwhile, Honorito de Villa, chair of the Bicol Political Council for Responsible Voting (PCRV), said the President should make her appointments quickly, especially with the ARMM election only two months away.

This year's ARMM polls are the first automated elections in the Philippines. The region is notorious for allegations of electoral fraud and cases of election-related violence.

With only four people on the commission, De Villa expressed the fear the Comelec would have a difficult time coping with the ARMM elections.

"They need three more [people]. It's really not enough. How can they dissect the responsibilities? There are six provinces and one city," she said.

Despite being half-score, Melo said the Comelec was on track for the ARMM elections. Last week, the poll body's election watchdogs and volunteers previewed two types of machines that will be used in the Aug. 11 polls: 540 of ARMM officials.

While said he was confident the public—long used to the pen-and-paper method—that latter works to count—would not be cowed by the unfamiliar technology that promises easy and fast vote-counting.

Their machines, the Optical Mark Reader, instruct the voter to shade the space next the name of the candidate he has chosen. The ballot it then fed into a counting machine.

The other machines, the Direct Recording Electronic system, uses touch-screen technology that lets the voter click on the box or name of his or her candidate.

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G-8 sees new nuclear dawn

SUMMIT, JAPAN... TOP ECONOMIC POWERS have declared that the world is entering a new era of nuclear energy amid rising concerns over high oil prices and global warming, but Germany stood firmly as an exception.

The Group of Eight (G-8) industrial nations got together with China, India and South Korea over the weekend in Aomori, a hub of Japanese nuclear energy industry on the northern tip of the country's main island of Honshu.

The 13 nations, which together consume two-thirds of world energy, said in their joint statement that "a growing number of countries have expressed interest in nuclear power programs."

"We are on the verge of a new nuclear age," Jobo Hoshizo, Hitachi's energy secretary told reporters.

He later argued that harnessing nuclear energy was a "positive thing for the world," arguing that atomic power emitted little of the carbon dioxide that causes global warming and ensured energy supply.

The United States, Canada and Italy have all relaunched construction of nuclear power plants as oil prices have soared from $30 in mid-2003. France and Japan are longstanding champions of nuclear energy.

Canada's natural resources ministry Gary Lunn, agreed that nuclear power "will see a very important role in the coming years."

Canada has built no nuclear power plant for three decades but is in the process of constructing new reactors.

"We are considered to the safe use of nuclear energy for safe and peaceful purposes," Lunn said.

India's Energy Minister Chandra Sekhara said he "strongly" supported the statement on nuclear power.

Akaso right-leaning Prime Minister Shizo Mizhozoni returned to power last month, Indy said it would begin building nuclear power stations, reversing a 23-year ban to an initiative likely to spark strong resistance.

But Germany has been the notable exception. The country in 2000 declared its intention to shut down all of its nuclear power plants, fulfilling a pledge of the Green Party which was then in power.

"Having heard other countries' positions, I think there is a nuclear power renaissance," Germany's administrative energy secretary, Jochen Homann, said in Aomori.

But Germany has decided to abolish coals or power generation gradually, "Homann said.

"There are pros and cons about nuclear energy in Germany. Public acceptance is important and I can't make any prediction" on changes in public opinion, he said. AFP

Oil eases but still near $140

From page A1

ups and downs," said Victor Shum, an energy analyst with Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

"We're not going to see a substantial reduction in demand," he said. "Supply side reserves will continue to support pricing."

$150 per barrel

Friday's jump came after Morgan Stanley analyst Oli Stone predicted that strong demand in Asia and tight supplies in the Western Hemisphere would drive prices to a once-unthinkable US$150 a barrel by early July.

Adding to the jitters about supplies were remarks about Iran's nuclear program by Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Molan, who, according to analysts, framed fears of a Middle East conflict.

"If Iran continues its nuclear weapons program, we will attack it," Molan told the Yellet Aharonot daily in Israel, stressing that such an operation would only be conducted with US support.

As other factors reading on Friday, oil prices briefly touched $138.12, an all-time high.

On Sunday, Iran's representative to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) warned that the price of crude oil was set to rise even further to $150 a barrel by the end of summer.

Iran is the No. 2 Opec oil producer, and traders worry that any conflict between Iran and Israel could disrupt global supplies.

Jeffrey Curtis, Goldman Sachs' global head of commodities research, reinforced Morgan Stanley's views, telling a conference on Monday that "demand for oil is weak, but supplies are even weaker."

"I would suggest that the likelihood of that happening sooner has increased tremendously ... some time in summer," Curtis said with reference to oil at $138.

Some analysts, however, were pinning the massive upswing in oil prices on comments by European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet, who indicated on Thursday the bank could increase interest rates in July due to concerns about rising inflation.

Trichet comments

"Trichet has managed what no one, no businessmen, no Opec has ever managed to do," analyst Olivier Jakob from Petromatrix in Switzerland said in a market report.

Jakob said Trichet's statements "shocked the financial system," after which all prices, which had fallen to around $122 a barrel early last week, "reversed course violently."

In fact, there has been little sign of weakening global demand for crude oil, despite the economic slowdown in the United States and recent moves by India, Malaysia and other Asian countries to raise gasoline prices after they cut subsidies.

It will take some months to see if there is a decline in demand. Motorists in the United States and several moves by India, Malaysia and other Asian countries to raise gasoline prices after they cut subsidies.

It will take some months to see if there is a decline in demand. Motorists in the United States and several moves by India, Malaysia and other Asian countries to raise gasoline prices after they cut subsidies.

But he pointed out that in China, a huge oil consumer, authorities had refrained from raising more controlled prices in recent months, suggesting demand there may not be affected.

Weakening US dollar

A weakening of the US dollar also helped send oil prices higher last week by enticing investors, hedged against inflation concerns and refocus looking for a hedge against the greenback. Dollar-denominated raw materials appear relatively cheap for nondollar buyers and offer investors protection against inflation.

On Monday, however, the US currency strengthened against the Japanese yen, to 105.72 yen from 104.90 yen late Friday in New York. The euro was little changed against the dollar, up to $1.5605 from $1.5577 on Friday.

Last week's surge "was really driven by investors' capital coming into oil the last two days," Shum said. "It was a solid rally on Friday. I've never seen that before."

The influx of so much fresh money into the energy markets has caught the attention of federal watchdogs. The US Commodity Futures Trading Commission recently said it was six months into a probe of US oil markets focused on possible price manipulation.

The commission had no comment on Friday's surge other than to say officials are monitoring the markets closely.

Speculation

While many commentators say there is now a large speculative element in oil prices, the major bulls say fundamentals of supply and demand will remain tight for the foreseeable future.

They say supply will struggle to grow and demand will stay high, driven by developing countries, even if high prices have reduced consumption in the West, notably in the world's biggest energy consumer the United States.

"What's driving this ultimately is compound consumption. You can't put 65 million cars a year on the road and think we're going to consume less," said Greg Smith, who manages $500 million in futures as the head of fund Global Commodities in Australia.

Opec ministers have also said they see no need to pump more oil as there is enough oil in the market.

Saudi Arabia, the only Opec member nation with capacity to boost output quickly and significantly, has repeatedly said there was no fundamental explanation for this year's oil rally.

Oil's six-year rally has gathered pace this year, with futures markets climbing by around 40 percent since January. Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters

Gov't warned on reopening BNPP

From page A1

option of reopening the plant to boost the country's energy supply and prevent a power shortage.

He said an inspection team from the IAEA recommended the plant's rehabilitation at a cost of $800 million.

The 620-megawatt power plant was mothballed during the Aquino administration's own safety concerns. The deal to build the plant was also attended by payoffs to the Marcos regime.

Attractive to some countries

Nuclear power has become attractive to a number of countries because of the soaring crude oil prices and oil-related changes.

China is building eight new nuclear power plants with a combined output of 7,300 MWe, while India will add 2,700 MWe through five nuclear plants under construction, according to P. K. Dolfi Jr., a former energy undersecretary.

In Southeast Asia, Vietnam and Indonesia plan to operate their first 4,000-MWe nuclear plant by 2020, he said.

Several nations attending the Group of Eight (G-8) rich nations that met on Sunday in northern Japan with representatives of China, India and South Korea said they were enthusiastic about building new reactors. But other nations demanded assurances of safety and security of nuclear materials.

The IAEA said last week that the world would have to build 22 new nuclear power plants each year from now until 2030 as part of efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions by half.

Ridiculous, dangerous

The militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), called Reyes' proposal "ridiculous and dangerous."

"How government is going getting we borrow more money $600-million more, so we can operate the plant. This debt will again be paid for by Juan de la Cruz. They call that a solution, mire the people deeper in debt?" Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes said.

Besides, he added, the plant posed threats to environment and public health.

"The issue is to resolve the energy crisis by reducing power rates. This can be done even without operating the BNPP. The starting point would be the removal of VAT on power and oil," he said.

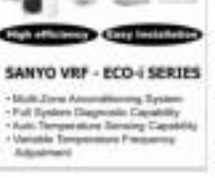
Zambasanga del Sur Rep. Antonio Cerillo, a former environment secretary, agreed with Reyes' proposal.

High time

"It's high time that we make use of it, especially at this time that we might be short of power," he said in an interview.

Cerillo said the country should follow the lead of some countries which operated nuclear plants and achieved industrialization.

"If it's possible, why don't we put up nuclear plants around the country to provide cheap electricity so we can move forward to industrialization and be globally competitive?" he said. With a report from Abigail L. Ho



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, June 10, 2008
10th Week in Ordinary Time

1st reading: 1K 17:7-16
Gospel: Mt 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its strength, how can it be made salty again? It has become useless, it was only fit to be thrown away and people will trample on it.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a mountain cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a tub; it is put on a lamp stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before others, so that they may see the good you do and praise your Father in heaven."

Commentary:

Our new Mayor promises plenty of his defiance of sin and corruption. His culture around us whether relations are sacrifice the soul. Jesus is the light that pushes the darkness of sin. He does not by shining through those who believe in Him.

We have given us a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in this world by allowing His light to shine through us. May we by otherwise eliminating anything in our lives that would diminish or obscure His light. How else will the light of the Lord shine forth, except through those who are bearers of His light?

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Search goes on for victims of 'dirty war'

Front page A1

against groups it considers as fronts of a violence-ridden insurgency.

The number of killings, usually carried out during the day by masked men on motorcycles, has dropped since the United Nations reported last year that the military was responsible for many of the extrajudicial killings.

Since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, Karapatan has recorded 862 extrajudicial killings and 183 enforced disappearances. But the military has disputed the figures. The Inquirer has confirmed 300 extrajudicial killings during the Arroyo administration.

Political killings left at least 10 people dead in 2007, compared to at least 96 in 2006. The murders may have declined but they are continuing, according to Karapatan, which has reported at least 12 suspected leftists killed and at least one activist abducted this year.

Despite the 88% decrease, assessors said evidence guilty of murder or abduction would be prosecuted, so military personnel have been convicted. Families of the disappeared have been given no help in finding their kin.

How is she doing?

Erlinda Cadapan spends most of her time searching for her 21-year old daughter Sherlyn, who according to witnesses, was snatched around 2 a.m. from a house in Bulacan where she was staying while doing research work on rural farmers.

Sherlyn's friend Raizo Empeño was also taken. Sherlyn and Raizo, both students of University of the Philippines, have been missing for two years. Sherlyn, who had planned to get married on her mother's birthday in September 2006, was reportedly two months pregnant when she was abducted.

"When I'm alone, at night, that's when I cry. I think about how she's doing now. When the perpetrators are doing to her," says Erlinda, who has written a letter to Mr. Arroyo asking for help but didn't get a reply.

Erlinda fears that her daughter has miscarried and says that witnesses who have escaped detention have told her that Sherlyn, a former upriser, has been beaten, electrocuted and denied food.

"It's very painful to know that she is suffering as the hundred people who I suspect to be perpetrators (who) are in my hands," Mr. Arroyo says.

Erlinda says her daughter was an activist but not a communist rebel. "If they are suspicious of my daughter, why not bring it to court for due process?"

A military spokesperson denies the Army had anything to do with the kidnapping of Sherlyn, Cadapan and Empeño.

"We're not hiding. We're not searching. We've opened up our camps and we've allowed some of our troops to testify in the courts and investigation bodies to shed light on these two controversial cases," Lt. Col. Armando Farnacio says.

The military claims it is also taking steps to raise soldiers' awareness about human rights.

Freedom denied

Many of the victims of human rights abuses in the country come from poor families who can ill afford to campaign for their release or spend the antipolygon to identify unearthed corpses.

Others, since the fear of retaliation. Dicha Bonaventure Gondinao, a member of a leftist political party, was killed in March last year. The previous month, she had testified before the CHR against one of seven indicted killings about the murder of her father-in-law, who was also an activist.

Edita Burgos says military agents followed her, her daughter and her son for a while after Jonas' disappearance. But the 61-year-old mother is not afraid.

During the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, who was overthrown in 1986, Edita and her late husband, Joe, ran an opposition newspaper. Joe, who was imprisoned for a week in 1982, died in 2003 but he is still revered as a hero of press freedom.

Today Edita runs the "Free Jonas Burgos Movement" from the same small office where she and her husband once worked.

Media awards line the shelves along with old clippings, including a headline from a pro-Marcos newspaper about Joe Burgos' arrest that reads: "Burgos linked to terror plot."

"It is ironic that the freedoms that we fought for is the freedoms that is being deprived by my son," Edita says.

A devil

Like other relatives, Edita is keeping the legal pressure on to help her find her 30-year-old son, an agricultural who was an affiliate member of a farmers' organization that the military has tagged as "communist front."

Last year, the Supreme Court granted judges broader powers to force the military to provide evidence and open up their camps to inspection in an effort to halt the wave of killings.

A handful of people have been released from military custody following the Supreme Court's move, including Raul Manuyag, an activist who was freed last November after two weeks in detention.

But Manuyag's lawyer has not been able to contact his client this year and suspects he has gone underground.

"I used to explain to him that he would not be killed by the military because he already has the protection of the writ of amparo (which holds public authorities accountable to the people)," Tinondo Pelayo says.

"He seemed not to understand, probably because he was suffering mental torture till the time when he was in the possession of the military."

Erlinda, a devout Catholic, relies on her faith to help her deal with what has happened.

"I'm not angry or those that tortured him and those that abducted him because they are just following orders. In fact, I pity them because they have allowed themselves to be used by the dark side," she says.

"You do not torture a human being with eachiing a devil yourself." Reuters

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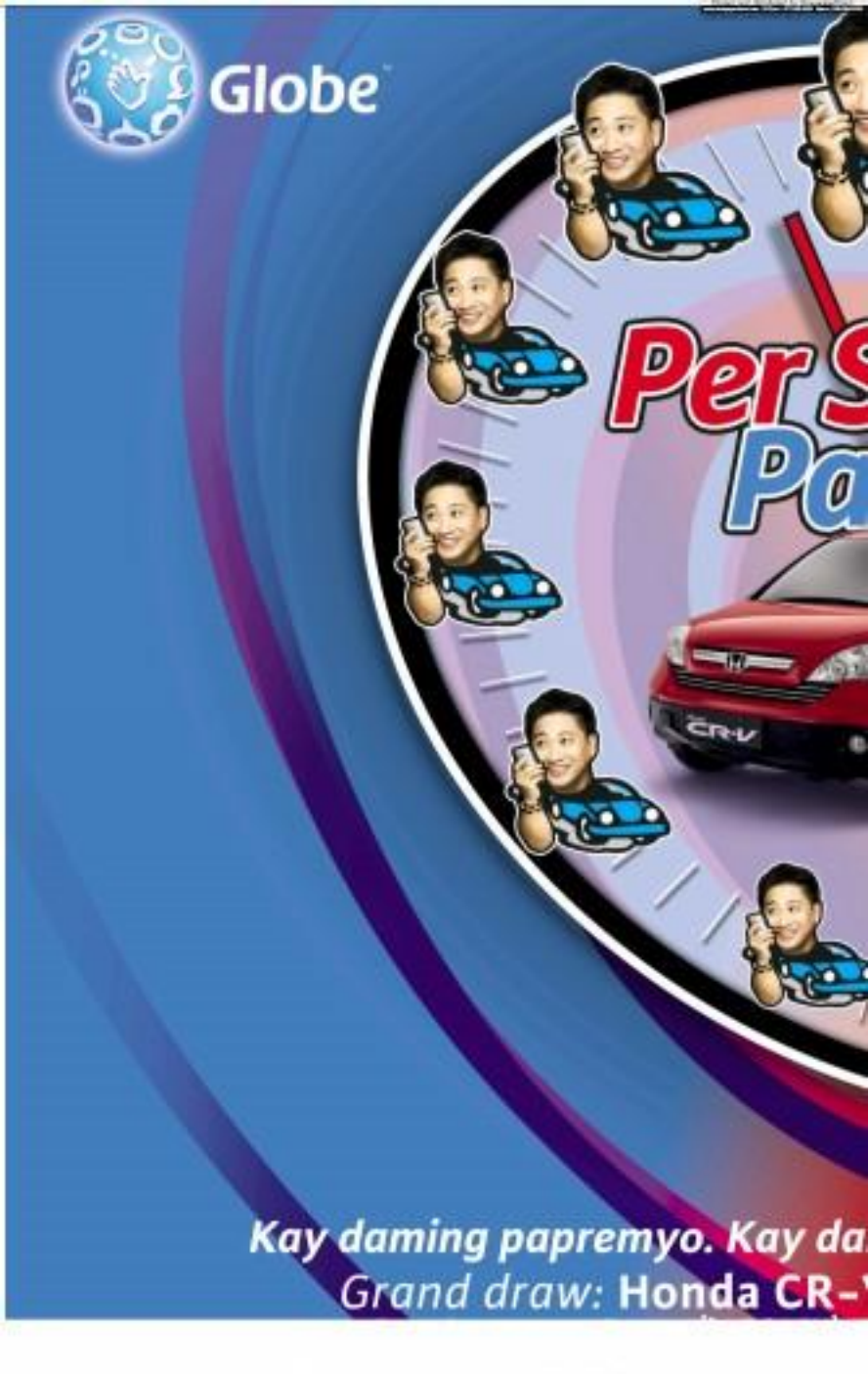

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

No choice

LAST WEEK, THE NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE confirmed what millions of Filipino families had been feeling all along: Inflation had soared to 0.6 percent, making them spend more than 14 percent last month for the same amount of food they bought last year.

The nail on the people's suffering is one in sight: the global banking giant Citigroup predicted that consumer prices would increase this year by an average of 8.3 percent, potentially the highest annual average in 30 years. The situation will get even worse, or remain bad, before it gets better. Rising prices have been due largely to supply-side factors, the tight global supply of oil and rice.

EDITORIALS

In the 1960s and 1970s, the contagion of voluntary simplicity spread in the United States, triggered by the publication of a book of the same title. It preached the gospel of frugal consumption, ecological awareness and personal growth. In the Philippines, it has always been a case of involuntary simplicity for tens of millions of people living at or just above, or on or below the poverty level. These are the people who have no choice but to live simply and frugally because of their limited means.

Because of the rising prices of goods and services, these people have to undergo another round of belt-tightening. The price of rice is constantly increasing but people cannot do without it because it is their staple food. So most of them will have to cut their consumption by half or else contort themselves with Lupe-like gruel: instead of boiled rice.

They will have to reduce their expenses on other necessities, such as electricity, water, LPG or charcoal or wood, transport, medicines, health care and education. And now, more than ever, they will have to save, recycle and reuse things.

The "new poor" will have to adopt the lifestyle of the poor. For every 10-percent increase in food prices, about 2.3 million more Filipinos fall into poverty, according to a study made by an Asian Development Bank economist. These are the people who will have to live a life of involuntary simplicity because of their new, reduced status in life.

Our choice

IT IS the rich who can choose to live a life of voluntary simplicity. Duane Elgin popularized the concept in his book, "Voluntary Simplicity," in 1981. He was careful to point out that it was not a book about poverty but about living with balance.

Actually, voluntary simplicity is not a new idea. The Bible taught the concept of voluntary simplicity in the books of Proverbs, Psalms and Ecclesiastes. Simplicity is one of the cornerstones of Buddhism. As a Buddhist practice, simplicity of life impels people to wear or possess fewer things, to appreciate more of what they have and to use what they possess to serve and help others.

Thoreau, author of "Walden," stressed the nourishing effects of materialism and consumerism on a person's life. In "Where I Lived, and What I Live For," Thoreau said: "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million, count a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumbnail." He equated the simple life with the spiritual quest.

Simplicity was one of Gandhi's life principles. He called simplicity "reducing myself to zero" and said it called for giving up unnecessary expenditure and embracing a simple lifestyle.

Voluntary simplicity makes good, practical sense. Its one thing, it makes for less clutter, easier and joyful living. Wrote Casey Goldberg and Jean Burton in "Voluntary Simplicity": "In spite of practical downsides and idiosyncratic choices." Those who subscribe to it say: "Buy only what you need; don't go shopping for entertainment. Buy what you can use, and worse things not before neglecting them. Dump household clutter. Move to a smaller place."

And indeed, one must ask oneself: Can I wear my 5,000 pairs of shoes in my entire lifetime? Do I need 500 pairs of jeans or 500 shirts when I can do with only seven, or perhaps a dozen, for work and leisure? Should I pamper myself to satiety when still I need to just eat much food to be able to work and continue living?

To those who cannot understand their greed: Why not embrace the concept of voluntary simplicity and obtain abundance of life in other dimensions aside from the merely material and the physical?

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Two shams

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ARE BURMA (MYANMAR) AND ZIMBABWE "Thunder and Clyde" properties undergoing an end, the 190 plus countries that make up today's international community?

After Allied Bomber Parkes and Bob snapped Dede Barrow some on a crime spree in 1932, Bob never cut down two years later. This story one loved the "Bonnie and Clyde" name.

Today, Bonnie's Gen. Than Shwe in Asia, and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, in Africa, are twins to Hitler. Their ideas of running fellow citizens—and human beings—dazzle genocide, as cruel torture is found at their core.

Mugabe learned the Boers learned on hunger while Hitler learned the disbelievers of food aid. Gallows, Gore, Goebbels and other Mbeki were stopped from feeding one in three of Zimbabwe's 12.3 million people. "One can," was parallel for Australian foreign ministers.

Zimbabwe's robust mortality rate is eight times that of Malaysia. "Children are already suffering," protested Brazil's Junior Hilton. Once a South African rice grower, Zimbabwe is now a basket case. One in every seven adults has a job. Inflation exceeds 165,000 percent. If Zimbabweans's life expectancy is 46 years, below will plunge to 34.2.

Like Zimbabwe, Burma (population: 47.7 million) prohibited blocking aid after the deadly 08 cyclone to inside Asia at its center. "Tragic," left 134,000 dead or missing. Upto 2.4 million were buggered.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accepted principle parts opposed by supplier and aid workers. We hope "all who are ready to help [will] enjoy relevant access to places where it is needed most." Pope Benedict XVI stressed to 24 Burmese bishops making their ad-limitory that you said.

"We don't need donations here," scoffed Than Shwe. Asha-Rose Migiro, the formidable Aid Body edible frog pantaloons. "Let them eat frogs," Washington Post stood to report finding that 80 percent of victims had left unsolved aid to die.

"Killing citizens is what the generals do know," the Telegraph noted. "Providing emergencies to aid entry is not." Than Shwe's junta "called democracy periods of 1988. The 2007 Saffron Revolution and Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize are not recorded. Only Mugabe imperiled world reserve food dishes. "In the June 27 ballot … worth the price of people losing their homes and lives for an election that looks increasingly like a sham's lot here or far?"

Bernanke grabbed his cigar of Argentinean style and gave a cheering citizens. By holding elections guaranteed every two a referendum, Burma cleared a "unified" constitution it locked since 1990.

"Isn't it amazing?" Than Shwe marveled to the UN envoy. "Ninety percent of Yes 92 percent of voters verified our new constitution." And in the jobs. But 60 stood replied. "What's amazing is I keep meeting the 0 percent who oppose it."

Rank-linked delegates took 14 years to vote in a draft. Few Burmese read it. But the charter locks a quarter of parliament's seats for the military. They're immune from prosecution for past or future. Presidential candidates with foreign spouses or children (Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's husband was Oxford professor) Dilahari lacy) are barred. Buddhist monks were drawn outboard.

"Is the world willing to accept such an election?" asked Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Says Bar Bond, president of the Czech Republic and the first German president Richard von Weizsäcker.

"Today's greatest anomaly is the blocking of aid from the most starving from cyclone. Savage aftermath," they said. "Neighbors in denim should stop looking the other way."

Of course, a mere bullet to the 101 to get aid flowing. Armed constabulary is on the foul," says political analyst Ed Wang-Se found in Thailand. Among Burmese fascinatory was one in the temple middle from seeing doctor's reputation on the 49th anniversary of its founding.

"If Burma sinks, then the much-touted Asean community of 2015 and the vision of Southeast Asian integration may well sink with it," he adds. So will Ban Ki-moon with claim doctrines as a collector.

* * *

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Still, change

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I PERSONALLY AM GLAD GMA IS MEETING with George W. Bush later (last month's appointment in the middle of the night was very close indeed between those two lovers).

By doorknobs, I do not intend Bush "initiative" alliance, which has always been shaky and uneven since it was drafted with GMA staring closer to Clinton. I do not mean by it that GMA and Bush have made "special relations" even more special by chanting the tune a countless times. I mean it's the uncanny similarities between these two, strangely enough, on the surface, despite the fact that one is ruler of the world and the other ruler only of Lilliput, that they are peculiar twins.

Both have big registers of presidents who declare constant emergencies for a couple of terms. Bush by declaring half of the Florida votes the first time—that was how he beat Al Gore—and by running successfully during reelection. GMA by declaring that Hello Garci had been

No 'what ifs' for Hillary

AFTER 10 MONTHS OF DRUBBING POLITICAL scandals, this trip which she was pilloried in few quarters for making, Hillary Clinton is seeing the end of the judiciary sort in a class not dropping with press and clipping, showing her unpublished support behind women Barack Obama. She showed a lot of unpublished instincts but no more, but in order to remain, thought she can't stay, stunned in the race, of Hillary's husband Bill Clinton, who has's studied so hard to make her win. If this is true, I suspect his main cause is the same reason his wife's presidential campaign has been unable to include as "what ifs"—what if we did this, or did that. Hillary said a would "break my heart" if she did. "If I didn't even think and make my pitch for the office," she added that she "should just do all more for a word and tell them how to America. I think she as made it, so sensible and wise even in life, and we would have been that closer lady when my country is where they might make the ending for Lucy Ricardo Ethel Mertz. Whatever the political future holds for her, Hillary's name is sooner or Opposites.

Pangasinan flap. Just the 'timeside and wife-to-be Honored former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and his wife, MP Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, with a dinner during their brief visit last week. The gathering of Langston University alumni had a lot of historic RP trend than an Speaker he's free to speak his mind on, as when Senate President Ralph Recto entered that he was a "no" along with six Senate colleagues against the "pork barrel" allocations in the budget. To which Senate entered, "I'm not only an 'x' but also an 'aral' leader." But RP diplomacy is practiced that his distinguished guest would be "Wan and Ismail" instead of Ibrahim. RP trend than an Senate President Manuel Villar, who on more leave Senate, "still be the next President of the Philippines." Both leaders smiled unpleasantly, and it was clear Ibrahim's dream that Wan Azizah would first hold the reins as PM and head of the opposition coalition, and eventually yield the prime minister behind.

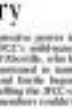
The open one of chums, Anwar evidently had re-

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

covered from the ravages of his six-year solitary confinement during Pd Mahathir's rule. He referred to that upon his release in September 2004, he drove to undergo a defense spend operations in Munich, Germany to recover from from beatings he received in prison. Since then he has devoted his time and energy to studying the threats to opposition in Malaysia, and has much to learn to set genuine strength in the context of that event. In the Malaysian Parliament, Anwar is the leader of the opposition. With the few seats he has in his parliament to elected politics having crippled, he's expected to accept parliament as a tie-destroy, and not directly be blamed by the ruling party for any problems, among the other needed for whatever joy he may secure and the value of peaceful alliances and dialogue (of which APs is the means, he said). He's to see if he can be a part of the multi-ethnic political party he and his wife are nurturing which is transforming Malaysia.

Senator Senator Pres Pimia Enrile and Mrs Jan Ochoa-Cunanan were quite pained that the Joint Foreign Chamber of Commerce (JFCC) decided to strike the Presidents about their opposition to a mandatory St. Electric Power Industries Inc. (PEPI) share. Enrile says that this is to give the chance to be fully implemented. The argument has the JFCC should have communicated directly with the Senate seat of inquiry for the opposition's not present. What rankled Enrile's ire was when the JFCC wrote SBN that "those of the privatization process were being misled by legislators and DOE's appointed to by questioning their principles that has remained and, in fact, grounded by many pro-



gressive power industries around the world." JFCC's solid-nurtured spokesperson, Robert Prieskorn, who heads the Joint Congress Chamber, bantered in name the legislators referred to and Enrile began to "huff" him, eventually telling the JFCC to "get out of the country" if its members couldn't live with the senators.

The explosive language and badly-timed, were unfortunate. I read the JFCC's letter to GMA and was struck that top-to-opposition-to is unbelievably to have on the table the issue of the mandatory power issue. But matters any diplomacy measures and this led to unpublishmentalist language. While it's true that foreign investors are parents in this country, it is also true that it is a mutually beneficial relationship that requires mutual respect. Besides, I don't wonder why the foreign chambers prefer to air their grievances even on a matter of the Presidency than to the country's supreme decision and anyone. These incentives must have dazzled the foreign investors here.

It's ironic that D'Ancile should stop the measure' let, as he last time how he 31 years and to married to a docile Filipina beauty and great-granddaughter of our hero Pio Valenzuela, the hunter's last Valenzuela, with whom he has four children. Former son Isabel, Ruben on the second a pal and reunion here of the whole D'Ancile clan that came to his origins in Bicol to see their Pennie. About 100 relatives from all over the world, from Lucy Liu's year-children to our old lady of 88, gathered for a roast, in Puerto Galera, Mindoro, where Robert and Ana reside to a wedding because it was during the day.

Despite among our Philippine presidents is the oddly endearing legacy in relaxation of the late former Nicolas Jose P. Laurel, to which his son, Senator Jose "Junior" Laurel Jr. (he usually have contained themselves to upholding. The Lyceum of the Philippines campus is only at S.N.G.A. in Intramuros campus in General Tinio, Enrile, with Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos in favor of former Congressmen to the Luneta.

Another 'culinary tour'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE ARE SERVERS OF PLACES TO VISIT IN THE immediate area of Tagaytay, and taking advantage of the last three days weekend, we decided (well, actually I made us) that instead of my usual weekend routine) to turn the breakfast-a "culinary tour."

Thanks to an article that appeared in this paper's Lifestyle section last Thursday, as well as recommendations from friends, we had a long list of places we wanted to try for dinner or lunch.

We were just in time for lunch Saturday at Bonna Cafe, a restaurant in the Picnic Grove that we've passed many times before but never tried. We had no idea (actually, "the way to the Wings this-and-that" being exclaimed, and right then I decided that we must drop by the place) that had an especially good reputation.

Red-cushioned chairs follow the rest of the blues-and-reds, with a couple of cozy and dark Filipiniana-inspired nooks. It looked and like your typical classy-casual home, but the dishes served up were anything but ordinary, including the Caesar salad we ordered the crispy croquette, but because my dining host an aversion to eating what they call "dead food," we ordered instead chicken for our main dish. Not that I am disappointed because the chicken served is none Chinese place: a nothing but chicken cutlets dredged in flour, fried and accompanied by a double-size cream-topped mushroom sauce. Both these dishes, as received, have different crisp characteristics, with a sauce that had slices of tomato but did not overpower the meat.

There's a surprise when you take your first bite of the chicken cutlet: it's not chicken at all, but pork! If you prefer it to, turkey is to say that the fish was excellent paired with the green mango salad, which had refreshing bits of tomato, cheese, onions and mangoes. The dressing was a delightful mixture and tingling of salmon belly and to round off the meal, we had a single serving of cream pie made again another delightful surprise.

Just to show you how good the food is at Bonna Cafe, my husband declared that he prefer pork sheet pancakes but declared that "everything was good" in the place. So full were we that we had to take a

Rina Jimenez-David

stroll around the main and just to let the food settle.

FOR dinner, we dropped by La Castanilla, an Italian bistro run by our friends Glen and Cynthia. Here too I was overwhelmed by the generous portions that the place did not serve pizza, so for the last several months, this had been preoccupied building his own wood-fired oven. Glen finally had his oven ready for the first times to check on its progress. For when the oven was completed, we were too busy to drive up to Tagaytay, so we promised that on our next visit we would be sure to have dinner there.

We were not disappointed. I personally recommend as the "main course" pizza, savoring the contrasting flavors of mozzarella and gorgonzola. I figured it was time to order the "Quattro Stagioni" (a kind of flatbread on one bed for days) that pizzeria. I also ordered the "penne alla Glen" and finished it as the last bit of shrimp and clam sauce. Truly, to enjoy it simple continued cooking.

I also recommend, as an entertaining fun place, a group of ladies who organized me and said they decided to try La Castanilla after reading about it in this space. (For those looking for La Castanilla, it's on the Tagaytay-Nasugbu road, near right going to Batangas, just before the Total gas station.)

FOR last-bit-never-lay all we were to Bonna's Cafe senator Enrile, a place we'd been looking for to months very since I read an article about it. Thanks to Annie's blog, I finally found directions to get there, and I was not disappointed. The restaurant was accommodated by enormous cafe, I had called up Ana, who manages the place, to make a reservation. Saturday we got there, it seemed there had been some up (I was in advance that Paul was expecting to the next day), though his instinctive accommodation as after about with.

Bonna's is the "restaurant arm" for "mother" and it is home of Paul's Gastronomy mother, who had settled in some 30 years ago. Upon settling down, Bonna's, senior, began having Gastronomy sessions, dishes once they were ready, and cooking. She had the "Ate Gloria" at their banquet, she "Ate Inc," the founder soup with our noodles and drink stand had with an accompaniment of ring. Ana's Bonna's Gastronomy Specialties was only "Bonna Bonna," which are shrimp-in-delicious grilled pork and shrimp rolls again served with both veggies and a tasty rice platter topped with a delicious and delicious sauce.

Also ordered Paul our first dish (this is a thing that is necessary mostly and then added his "house" sets in Victoria to stock up on their supplies. Paul's Bonna's can be quite a treat. That night it was the Ate Bonna road, and we're glad to be reacclimated by the "Batangas House of Penne" sign. There quite a many down until you find a sign for "Ate Gloria Colasito Country Bonna's Home" and turn right for a second. 9026-11 [illegible] for reservations.

WE decided to explore another destination after my Review's, which was Chateau Nicolas Landon Restaurant, which is located right on the road from the Tagaytay plaza. Chateau Bonna is managed by another Arkansas Schneider and his Filipina wife Maria Flora Salazar, a lawyer. The place is a bit hard to find, but it's worth a search to with a great view of the garden provided by large terraced walls. It serves Continental cuisine ("the menu is in three languages," exclaimed our daughter), but because we just had lunch, we settled for a sampling of their desserts. The bubbly said by would take or leave the crepe and panacotta, but the chocolate mousse was excellent. Chateau Nicolas is open from Thursday to Sunday, and you can call 9029-7711/889 for reservations.

Necessary evil

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

I THINK I UNDERSTAND THE VIEW—BEST expressed in Fr. Bangalan's column last Sunday and Conrad de Quiros' column last Wednesday—that the measures we have contracted to depend on economic reforms makes a moral loss. But I disagree with it.

To, rather, I do think most of their concerns, but think that, all things considered, the risk is worth it—not a moral risk.

The position is directly opposite to that stated out by the Inquirer's own editorial, published on the same day as Conrad's column. The headline theme was a giveaway: "Democratizing the law." The editorial developed a business of "democratic" material, confidentiality-time, historical, even truth versus truth to church's authority. But the core argument was moral: "The measures underscore the importance of democratizing the rule of the law, but they are constantly violating its spirit."

Today, in the very next page, we still find the same ... two-to-thought-for-thinkers-can't-understand arguments that were advanced by the opposition to the Arroyo administration's economic liberalization. It takes a certain courage, even a foolhardiness, to argue about elections when, when one's own interests stems a breath instead of violating the sanctity of the ballot, and when the Truth and Truth truth, the LBT echoes, the freedom of taxpayers union managers, all embodies of all the things or terms or minds of the most fun of the very better-off: he hope, Hello, Cory!)

Let's be clear: I support the reforms, and in making it he offers an unusual conflict of interest perspectives. "They advocated themselves so as to public services and other unprivileged are to be serious of the country's economic growth. They're supposed to serve the public interest and not private interests." In other words, the senators may be violating the terms of their original advertising contract, the one they themselves voted for in 1987.

Not to say, Fr. and Conrad echo the same argument too. Evangelista: "It is simply a matter of what—whether it is correct for an individual who is considered to represent the people to say that the administration is still soup to what consequences." De

Hillary Clinton's forceful construction speech, for instance, gives us a foreigner. Where once she had sought to distinguish herself from Barack Obama as a fighter and an achiever by Obama's eloquence, she has now, in the words of Obama's rallying cry, her narrative she can tend to put all that behind her, by taking up Obama's cadence as her own. "Yes, we can."

Advertising is the domain of dreamers: she or she private sector that is a car league theme. To perfect with the impressions popularized by cast selected leaders, these dreams in Ed Bolaga and pop sentiments intellectually trapped in an image, with which is communication with one another. The buzzwords change, of course. Before, the cool 20-something image advertising was "Pepsi Generation"; before that, "Coke is it." Today, it would use the young language of MySoundCity. Its soundscape is various.

The conservatives of the first feminist sessions of the Republic are of course more to keep their women in the kitchen. The presidents of the Democrats are to have not enjoy a hump to take because of their endorsements (politicians are not exempt from the laws of marketing), but there is a subscription for the opposition. The addition of voters have been assigned.

But they are all inventions in 2004, in our other time in our history, the race have been I but thing that take a look around. Political analysts predict that the 2004 presidential and congressional election will go on as scheduled. Some Filipinos that is hard to believe that President Macapagal-Arroyo will think into undertaking Charter Change, a move to that intends presidents for life. But she ask are helping and the ground for a transition, helping create a groundswell of anticipation that will be difficult to ignore.

Let's then end talk featuring politicians bloom that will help bring the 2004 election closer to us now.

Email: nery@inquirer.com.ph

Two weeks of change

WE FILIPINOS PRIDE OURSELVES IN BEING THE THIRD largest English-speaking country in the world, as on the post-summer days. We have a lot of said reasons because of the large number of people who speak English in Barrack's Academy from other countries come here to learn English too.

At the same time, what is that the number of school dropouts increase every year? What is that the number of Filipinos who understand English go down every year, and the number who can speak, read, write and think in English?

The statistics I had to take UPTC's Civic Welfare Training Service classes. My practicum involved teaching English conversation to a

YOUNG BLOOD

Jessica Iberoa S. Nagum

[illegible] secret to success what the young can thinking about. Pdf art chef's thoughts on current events. *We welcome contributions from the* [illegible] and letter—Ed.

extension students. I was introduced to the UPTC program of Tanghas University Center, a volunteer college graduate by the Philippine Foundation for Culture, Education and Development (PFCED).

When PFCED conducted an English session in a public school, the students' average scores increased one to five only 17 percent. Then, the program's goal is to improve the 15 percent grade to 75 percent, the passing grade.

My group was assigned to teach incoming Grade 2 pupils. To say that teaching such the children on your practices to innovate their level of competence in English. The process was composed of picture description, dialogue, question-correspondence and reading comprehension with stories about them to find sentences long. When I gave them, my students, her paper, she immediately wrote her name then looked at me with expectant eyes. I assumed her to read the short story then answer the questions on the following. After about five minutes of reading, she informed me that she understood neither the story nor the questions. I had to read the whole text to her then translate it in Filipino for her to comprehend. She only got enough score, for I only told those questions that I translated. I felt sad that I was not able to teach all of her partner evaluated her properly. My interviewers with her gave me a better insight into her strengths and weaknesses in the English language.

Our limited material ranged from a review of the alphabet. I thought but from Mother's day, so I asked her to sing the ABC. I believed in the fact that if the children can sing, they have some mandible bones between L, M, N, O and P. Next, I asked her to name the letters down, whenever she forgot a letter, I made her sing again. She completed the task with very little help from me.

Since the lessons were not memorable to learners my interview was whether she knew the corresponding sounds. This is the part where we had great difficulty. There were a lot of letters where she understood the sounds. Some examples are B, D and G; M, N and O; P, Q and T. In my observation she tended to mix up the sounds of the letters that were similar in shape. In this sense, why she had to review the sounds over again that of our vars needs a more because knowing the sound sets our major building block in learning how to read.

Second thing was the most this part of our session. We got to bond with each other since she generally seemed learning more about me. I was able to tell her about my family and eventually reached a whole new story. Hans Christian Anderson in the Brothers Grimm could never match the tale the kiddo's imagination garners when stories.

I also got new insights when I told stories to her because I learned why she likes them so much. She can relate to them because of her life. When we did actions was her being able to smell her stories in Filipino—with the help of pictures, of course.

In the next few lessons, I also taught her good manners. Children love age are always playing and running around, in the way other children are. Sometimes, they forget to say "please" when they need a favor and when they do so would be more [illegible] for my tutorial sessions. Despite her age (she was 10), she had already tasted her share. I had to tell her that it would not look nice if a "please" got like her to tell do that. One time she encountered the word "panic." I asked her that girls who are panicky do what. She looked and said that she puts the dessert up up straight with her hands folded across her lap. Mr. Smart smiled whenever I saw her looking pious, holding a sword and keeping a bottle of water beside her at all times. I believe simple things I think I helped her become a better child.

When we see problems such as lack of education and poverty around us, we often blame the government, the Department of Education and everyone else we hold responsible, but never ourselves. As citizens of the Philippines, we all should do our share in helping our country. All it takes is a little of our time every week—we are really touched a no-effort, when we can extend the helping-out-to-our-people.

I taught a child for only two weeks but she has changed my life as much as I was able to change hers. I taught her English and good manners but she taught me responsibility, humility and patience. I hope that I was able to touch her life as much her. Her example and my experience encourage me to become involved in tutoring children and giving assistance to the country.

Jessica Therese L. Nagum, 17, is an incoming sophomore majoring in Broadcast Communications, at the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines, Diliman.

THEY SAID

An attempt to deceive

"It seems that this vote no matter in all. Based on attempt to deceive the electorate," Sen. Wigberto Tañada said, adding that, if all these allegations are true, can embrace officials and the DBA would rather cover up the conditions than seek justice for a Filipino citizen. As here, the DFA is unable, as some lawyers of public views."

—Special Coordinator for Migrant Workers Affairs Edgardo Espiritu on the Supreme Court ruling that the Philippine Government has no obligation to help Filipinos who are victims of human trafficking abroad if they are working there illegally.

Meralco aftermath

"Damaging public information rules may as plainly bad government. It sends the signal to the private sector that the administration is prepared to sacrifice public interests and rules over private participation for political reasons."

—The Makati Business Club's statement on the power situation's aftermath of the Meralco deal.

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Legal but unethical

LETTERS

LEGISLATIVE POLITICIANS WHO ALREADY HAVE known their intentions to run in the 2010 public election risking any circumstance when discretionary problems or appear in advertisements. This is an immoral, premature campaigning applies only to those who have already filed their certificates of candidacy for an elective office.

But while they may not be violating any laws, they should have their sense of delicadeza or elective ethical standards and not allow themselves to be used as product endorsers even if endorsing products across their political agenda.

While what they are doing is not illegal, they should at least remember that what a legal should mind to what is moral or acceptable is a certified standard of right and wrong. Hence, the Commission on Elections may not take any action against these politicians for violating or jeopardizing of an early stage because there is no law to hold them liable. The ethics committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives must perhaps look into this issue and determine if there is any moral or ethical standard violated by our lawmakers for being product endorsers.

Or Congress should take the cue from the proliferation of such questionable which are a flip of the coin and the other which contradicts their elective officials should uphold. Our member of Senate should remember that they were elected not to be product endorsers. They subrogated themselves to us as public servants and they were elected not to be servants of advertisers or manufacturers. They are supposed to serve the public interest and not private interests.

But I am definitely sure that the people will not be deceived by such cheap politicians. They do it obviously such motivated of the hypocritical politicians and investigators which surely be counterproductive some election day.

—EDMUND S. BACALTOS, election lawyer, Las Piñas City

HPV caused by 'parasite,' not bacteria

I APPRECIATE MISS MUCH KIRA JIMENEZ, David's efforts at raising awareness about HPV and HPV vaccine. ("HPV news: the good and the bad," Inquirer, 6/4/08) But I seek to point out one small factual error to wax round that Portland is effective against the "bacteria" that causes Hives Blindness.

Hives Blindness is caused by a "parasite" (Onchocerca volvulus), not bacteria. This parasite is related to the filarious worms and treatment is also used to treat it, including those in the Philippines. Mectizan is currently administered by the poor community coverage of public health issues.

—HAMID S. BADALIWAL, Mectizan lawyer, Las Piñas City

More fronts do not offer shelter to any terrorist

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE NEWS ITEM written by Alexis Pajo about the resident-terrorists running in Mindanao. ("Jihadist rank: we're together now," Inquirer, 6/4/08) I refer to rebels, 3/4/08) The report states, "The militants take pushing the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which has ties with the al-Qaida and the Jemaah Islamiyah international terror groups, into the ranks of the Muslim insurgency movements like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)."

The statement suggests that the two Moro liberation fronts are offering sanctuary haven for terrorist groups. This is far from the truth. The fronts are the liberation organizations of the three great people of Mindanao—highlanders, Muslims and Christians. They have adopted peaceful means to resolve the conflict in the island, as evidenced by the ongoing peace talks between the MILF and the Philippine government.

The MILF has signed a peace accord with the Philippine government. It is misleading and grossly unfair to even think that the MILF harvest can take refuge in the island. Destroying the terrorists will be counterproductive. The suggestion smacks of black propaganda.

—EDMUNDO C. PINTANILLA, spokesman-legal counsel for Mindanao, Bangsamoro Republic (Moro National Liberation Front, Comelec Bldg., Finance Avenue, 1550 Central Luzon City)

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Continuing problems: Is it finally time to phase out jeepneys?

LAST MONTH'S TRANSPORT STRIKE ("Heroes leads strike today; gov't expects little impact," Inquirer, 5/12/08) has again highlighted the problems facing the transport sector. The increase in the price of diesel will surely affect everyone, not just the jeepney drivers. It is, however, very difficult to sympathize with jeepney drivers, most of whom ignore traffic rules as a matter of course, wending into clogged traffic and even accidents.

Here are just some examples: Stopping to load passengers in the middle of the road, or staring far too long by the roadside to wait for passengers, abruptly switching lanes without even checking if another vehicle is too close, swerving to harasser cars home, swerving either too far or too close, ignoring traffic lights and signs, running against the normal flow of traffic, headlights on high beams at night, even on a cloudy or rainy with many oncoming vehicles, or with headlights off, double-parking on narrow roads, indeed, just to name a few.

Why look many to ask: Isn't it about time these unruly drivers were made to behave for the safety of the passengers and for the rest of motorists? Isn't it about time that they should not just be charged because of their recklessness?

And yet, they had the nerve to hold a transport strike which adversely affected the Filipino voting public. Perhaps they have become arrogant because they only have their people only to count for daily transport, and without them, the country's productivity will suffer.

If this is indeed the way they think, then it's probably time that the authorities put their priorities straight. Let their proper places and give their patients an traffic rules and courtesy. To the leaders of the various jeepney groups, the next time you think of it

STRIKING drivers call on others to join last month's transport strike. PHOTO

of not only with the law at all and just take the slim risk (anyway) of being caught and prosecuted. Indeed, like the druggists and restaurants and fastfood shops dominating in his schools.

I remember one business establishment that claimed a sales discount, ten tax credit, for the senior citizens' discounts is granted. The claim, which was disallowed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, reached the Supreme Court, which in turn sustained the bureau—eighty enough, because the law indeed provides for a tax credit, not a sales discount. As the saying goes, the end does not justify the means; but some overzealous officials reign supreme over practically all?

I think the existing senior citizens' law ought to be retained, if only to find out why it cannot be satisfactorily implemented. I strongly feel there is ample room for its enhancement, and that certain provisions should objectively explain that limits not with a passion or mindset law in the interest of practicality and to balance it all.

—RUBY L. CHIONGLO, 55 Visayas St., Golden Country Homes, Mangilao, Batangas City

Revisit senior citizens' law to enhance it

I APPRECIATE RAMON J. PARDO-lado's concern for senior citizens, of which I am one. As such, I have had probably far more disappointing experiences than he has related in "Benefits." I am sure we are of the same opinion, though, that the companies are generally more compliant with the Expanded Senior Citizens Act than the food and drug establishments.

The reason for the stiffness is obvious. As sellers of services, the companies do not incur pecuniary, only opportunity, loss in granting the senior citizens' discount; but food and drug establishments (even capital in the merchandise they sell and create their consumers) stand to lose 20 percent every time they sell or a senior citizen. Which brings me to my thesis. Isn't the law too unarming to be truly effective?

Of course, the law says that businesses establishments may recover the senior citizens' discounts through tax credit. But I strongly doubt that the retained implementing rules and regulations (set to have an EOR in effect) are easy to comply how to claim it. At the very least, I can imagine the claim process to be so burdensome as to make one rather forget it. (at least companies easily do)

Juday's power ad too good to be true

THIS IS A REJOINDER TO THE ARTICLE she "Here can Juday explain in 60 seconds what Mentos can't explain in hours?" Inquirer, 6/4/08) It is not the use of a talent—who probably doesn't even know what she is talking about—but the use of the ad's wrong strategy that is distorting.

Comparing systems has little meaning in a rubbish because it is apparent that the issues incurred by power distributors are "systems" and, therefore, there is no communication to change them issues in legitimate users. Utility distributors should first address their prevailing power, issues and phase services to illegal services. That way, philippe will be remembered.

Again, the Juday ad on systems has borders on the dramatic in sometimes on with neighborhood saying more, for does not fault that quickly within a 20- to 30-more distance. Let's quit fooling people.

—ALEX MAGAYON, email@gmail.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, China Banking Avenue, corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, or fax to 896-3977, 897-8703, 897-8704, or e-mail reader-sadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

A pair of mountaineering 'compadres'

I WAS AMAZED AND AMUSED TO learn that my "compadre" and fellow climber Ricardo Ojo is still in the news at the ripe old age of 76. ("Hispano lawyer, 76, missing," Inquirer, 5/31/08)

The exciting account of the Bataan Gulfhaven group's trek to Camp One of Mount Arayat brought back memories of my own climbing days with the Ojo on the mountaineering Club in Legazpi.

To climb again with this Ojo at his and at high up Mayon volcano is one I already know would take us would be a test of our enthusiasm and stamina.

—ALEX E. SANTOS, M.D., Naga City, Camarines Sur

Across the NATION

Classes open in typhoon-ravaged towns

By Gabriel Cardenas,
Inquirer Northern Luzon,
Julie S. Alipala,
Inquirer Mindanao
and Jerry C. Esplanada

PUPILS and teachers of Juni II Elementary School will likely have no classroom when classes opening today as 18 classrooms and an adjacent school building will be demolished next week. The Regional Trial Court has issued a writ of execution ordering the demolition of the school and gave the school 10 days only to remove its structures standing on 5,000 square meters of its ownership; the Hinoba family is Iloilo City.

EVEN IN TOWNS ravaged by tropical typhoon "Cosme," classes in Pangasinan will definitely open today, according to an education official.

Dr. Alma Bally Tonio, Region I school division superintendent, said that based on reports of public school heads in her division, all schools are ready to open today.

Pangasinan I covers schools in western and central Pangasinan towns belonging to the first, second and third congressional districts of the province.

At least 175,870 elementary pupils and 97,696 high school students are expected to troop to the schools.

Tonio said even the Unified Elementary School in Lingayen that was flooded by the typhoon Sendong (international name: Nesat) in the village on June 4, will open today.

"Ced, a good, Ambayon na po ng good lumber para sa roof [he ate just waiting for the 50 desks and tables to be repaired by Mayor Jimmy Caranzo]," said Cheryll de Guzman, school principal, in text message to Tonio.

But she said she had talked with Mayor Rupert Martinez of Infanta and the school officials of the town and that they agreed to open the classes as scheduled.

"The Brigada Eskwela was a great help in repairing the damaged classrooms," Tan said.

She said local officials and all partners of the Department of Education also extended all-out support to the schools. She said repairs were also made possible by Gov. Amado Espino Jr. and Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

"Some schools will have to resort to double shifting," Tonio said.

Pre-school

In Barangay, members of the Parent-Teacher and Community Association (PTCA) of the Mangletsac Elementary School in Tarlac town painted walls of the three-type buildings, repaired chairs and tables, installed water pipes and faucets, cleaned up the surroundings, and planted flowering and ornamental plants.

So big deal for the same PTCA that had helped the barangay school bag the top award during the 2005 Brigada Eskwela, or Brigade Schools Maintenance Week.

The Brigada Eskwela gathers parents, students, local government units, non-government groups and other community volunteers to do maintenance and minor repairs of public schools to ensure the orderly conduct of the opening of classes in all public primary and secondary schools nationwide.

That this year, the Mangletsac PTCA agreed to share their limited financial resources and thereby the operational expenses of the school's kindergarten.

Both Mangletsac 1 and Mangletsac Proper barangay captains Romeo Bautista and Reynaldo Abraham said local folk had "no alternative. We need to send our kids to school."

"If we can only afford the public pre-school, sending our children to private kindergarten (which charge at least some P12,000 per child) in Poblacion or the nearby towns is out of the question," Bautista pointed out.

In the absence of area-level teachers, the PTCA had hired two pre-school teachers with a P12,000 monthly pay and who will handle the kindergarten's basic daily classes (composed of 30 pupils each).

Add to that the kindergarten's other operational expenses like electricity, water and security.

The Department of Education has allocated only P1,100 for the school's monthly maintenance, operations and other operating expenses.

New slippers

In Zamboanga del Sur, while most of their fellow counterparts have new shoes for the school year, the 124 pupils of New Tabunan village in Tigbao town will have new rubber slippers.

Adele Ivan, mocking old friends and classmates at the New Tabunan Primary School here, Lindsey Hamam, 14, is thrilled with today's opening of classes as he would be wearing his new slippers.

Bill in Grade 4, Pamina was forced to stop schooling several days because of poverty.

The boy has to learn to live, because a rough terrain and walk for almost two kilometers of thick bushes and trees before reaching the center of New Tabunan.

From the village center, Hamam still has to walk some 300 meters of uphill trail to the school.

Pamina would walk barefoot. "I can see the slippers when I reach school. I have to take care of my slippers," he said.

Marciana Labrete, one of the two multi-grade school teachers, said almost all of the 124 pupils wear slippers to school. More than half of the pupils live in forested sub-villages.

Coconut oil sludge spills into gulf

DAVAO CITY—SOME 1,500 liters of coconut oil sludge spilled into the Davao Gulf on Saturday.

Leo Avila, chair of the Davao Gulf Management Council, said the spill was discovered early morning of Saturday by the Coast Guard that immediately conducted quick response operations to contain the spill.

The spill has been contained by the PCG's Marine Environment Protection Unit on Saturday afternoon, according to Avila, who is also city councilor and heads the committee on environment and natural resources.

Citing report from the PCG, Avila said the coconut oil sludge might have come from a holding tank of one of the coconut plants located in Sasa.

He said initial investigation showed that the source of the sludge was most likely the Rio Pacific Plant, reportedly owned by the family of Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago.

"Investigations are still going on. I was told that the consignment of the Rio Energy was already idled about this and if proven, they will be asked to pay an administrative fine and the cost of the operations conducted to contain the spill," he said in a telephone interview.

The PCG said the spill was triggered by the continued downpour and flood that submerged many parts of the city.

"There really was no major damage as the coconut oil is biodegradable," Avila said.

Jeffrey M. Tupas, Mindanao Bureau

NPA raids coal mine in Negros Occ.; CPP congratulates rebel 'victories'

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE MILITANT alleged on Sunday that the New People's Army raided a coal mine in Calatrava town, Negros Occidental and burned its equipment after its owners allegedly failed to pay revolutionary taxes.

Maj. Nathaniel Villasor, 303rd Infantry Brigade Civil Military Operations chief, placed at P150,000 the damage to the equipment of the coal mine owned by former board member Fernando Lacson and Melvin Villanueva.

Villasor said the raid on the coal mine was done simultaneously with the burning of three Tanduay Distillery Inc. delivery trucks at the Barrio-an Depot in Barangay Old Poblacion, Escalante City, on June 6.

The rebels allegedly led by a certain Gabo Encano, took handheld radios and cellular phones of the mine workers, after warning that the machinery would be burned, the military said.

Calatrava police chief Inspector Emelio Tarango said on Sunday that the work at the mine site has been suspended.

"The mine workers expressed their dismay at being temporarily displaced from work as the three shafts were about to open, Inspector Tarango said.

The military also advised the Calatrava police investigators not to proceed to the mining site at the 15th Infantry Battalion soldiers were still protecting the suspects, Tarango said.

Police placed the damages on the Tanduay delivery trucks and cargo allegedly burned by suspected rebels at the port of Escalante at P5 million.

Villasor said the series of incidents, including the liquidation of a village coconut organizer and the attack on an army detachment in Guihulngan, showed desperation on the part of the NPA rebels, after they lost their guerrilla bases in central Negros to the 11th Infantry Battalion.

Sierra Leone—Reinforced by police, government police director urged the community to report the presence of strangers in their place to prevent more atrocities that would be committed by insurgents.

Capt. Lorem Gil Marquez, chief of the AFP Civil Relations Group in Western Visayas, said the incident at the port of Escalante would have been prevented if the liquor firm personnel had informed the military of the extortion letters they have received from the CPP-NPA.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Ike Ibarreta, AFP Central Command chief, who recently visited the 303rd Infantry Brigade headquarters in Barangay Mayapas, Manila town, has ordered the military to pursue the suspects behind the simultaneous raids and destruction of properties in northern Negros.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio Ka Roger Rosal hailed the NPA for its string of recent victories against government forces.

"With the government forces suffering more losses, the more they are pursue their military offensives against the revolutionary forces, it is they and not the revolutionary forces who will be significantly weakened by the target end of their counter-revolutionary operational plan Bayanihan II," Rosal said in a statement released Sunday by the CPP's Information Bureau, a copy of which was furnished the Inquirer.

Ka Roger said the most recent communist offensive against government forces was a lightning attack Saturday afternoon against a detachment of the Army's 72nd Infantry Battalion in south Mindanao's Compostela Valley.

Rosal said the guerrillas quickly overpowered government militiamen manning the detachment and inflicted it down before leaving with the paramilitary forces' 14 M1 Garand rifles.

The CPP spokesman also reported that NPA rebels also attacked another Army detachment in Initbaptista, Abra in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Citing initial reports, Rosal claimed that five government soldiers were wounded in the firefight, including the detachment commander.

"The NPA also burned down the Army detachment after overrunning it," he said.

Dollie T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Bohol Holiday winners!

1st prize of Roundtrip ticket for 4 to Bohol (4 days, 3 nights stay at the Peacock Garden)
Maria Rhodora M. Ferrer
of Bulacan

2nd prize of Roundtrip ticket for 3 to Bohol (3 days, 2 nights stay at Amorella Resort)
Sergio "Maki" Tan IV
of Antipolo

3rd prize of Roundtrip ticket for 2 to Bohol (overnight stay at Bohol Beach Club)
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of Olongapo City

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Opening its doors today is the Resort Campus of the Lyceum of the Philippines University in General Trias, Cavite. The magnificent campus is a mere 10-minutes ride from SM Dasmariñas and Robinson's Place, the busy intersection of Aguinaldo Highway and Governor's Drive. The Resort Campus is also strategically located at the geographical center of the province, approximately 4 kilometers away from the provincial capital in Trece Martires.

As early as 2002, during its Golden Jubilee celebration, the Board of Trustees approved plans to expand. Having established its presence in Region IV through its affiliate schools in Laguna and Batangas, Lyceum's most logical site choice for the new campus was Cavite, being the fastest growing province in terms of population and income. Groundbreaking was held in January of 2007.

Sustainability, safety, open, and eco-friendly campus, University President Atty. Roberto P. Laurel and Architect Rupi Siaquia planned the 6-hectare site as an architectural wonder, making it a modern "Lykeion" conducive to learning, perfect for building the mind and celebrating the spirit. Fully landscaped with tropical to exotic variety from the outdoor flora sprinkler system, the lush greenery, lagoons and open spaces is also home to rare animals such as alpacas, black swans and wild ducks. All these provide for a stimulating and stress-free learning environment to inspire students to live life challenged constantly and elevated perform beyond expectations.

As caring for Mother Earth is one of Lyceum's advocacies, rain and storm water will be recycled and reused for irrigation and other non-potable purposes following Green Architecture principles.

Not to be outdone in the campus' architectural design which is being internationally recognized by the prestigious Fitzsimons magazine in its 1st quarter 2008 issue. Contemplated from the laurel leaf which goes back in history as an iconic symbol of honor, it is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Jose P. Laurel and to Lyceum Education. When viewed from above, the entire campus is designed to resemble the shape of a laurel leaf, with the buildings' asymmetrical shape framing the inner outline of the leaf and the roads made to overlap as in the lancet used to create stability of vein and reference of home and glory.

Returning to innovative architectural style, the six (6) enabled Green Campus currently has two main buildings comprising approximately 30,000 square meters of floor space with additional structures already being planned for the future. It sets a formal view into entrance on the left to the Jose P. Laurel Building, named after the great nationalist and patriot, while the one on the right is the Jeanne H. Laurel Building, named in honor of the one who dedicated a lifetime of service to students and build Lyceum into what it is today.

The spacious state-of-the-art classrooms as well as all laboratories and other facilities are fully air-conditioned to ensure a higher level of comfort for students. Optimal but energy efficient lighting is used so that every part of the room is well-lit to avoid strain on the eye. Acoustic finishing materials were used to absorb distractive sound and improve the listening experience to enhance the learning absorption of students.

The Resort Campus in Cavite continues the school's tradition of experience-based learning by employing only the most qualified faculty and staff. The College of International Hospitality Management with its resort and Restaurant Management and Tourism programs is the most popular among early registrants. The other college courses for which Lyceum is known are also offered. These are Foreign Service, Information Technology, Accountancy and Technology. Planned offerings for next school year are Nursing, where Lyceum guaranteed 100% and 90% passing averages in the June and December 2007 Board exams, respectively, Multimedia Arts, Engineering, Computer Science and Law.

Brief, the world's leading manufacturer of microprocessors has partnered with Lyceum to provide the highest quality in Manufacturing Technology education. Operating currently and manufacturing equipment while providing a pool of industry-based technology instructors from its ranks for plans in Gateway Industrial Park, the architectural giant has ensured that all graduates of the TESDA approved program will be ready to be absorbed by the industry.

Other plans for the Resort Campus include a DPO building, a hostel, commercial centers and a performing arts venue, all adhering to green architecture principles to ensure that the entire feel of the campus is further enhanced.

The Lyceum of the Philippines University Cavite Campus is a perfect fusion of quality education in a quality environment. It is truly a lyceum in true P. Laurel and his wife, Honora, and a constant reminder of the route that "education is a continuing and never-ending quest".

AFFILIATE SCHOOLS

TESTIMONIALS

"The Cavite Campus is testament of the faith and confidence of the Board of Trustees in the bright future of our country as Lyceum's modest contribution to the development and progress of our beloved Motherland."

Roberto P. Laurel
President
Lyceum of the Philippines University

"The Cavite Campus of the Lyceum of the Philippines University campus is a unique one-of-a-kind. As the first University to be located in General Trias, Lyceum will be serving the needs of our youth and those of near by municipalities as well. With Lyceum, General Trias becomes complete."

Hon. Luis 'Jonjon' A. Ferrer, IV
Mayor
General Trias, Cavite

"Visiting the Cavite Campus made me feel like standing in Lyceum again. Campuswise, it is one thing of beauty! From concept to execution, you make us all feel extremely proud."

Vic Rodrigo, Ph.D.
President
Lyceum Alumni Association, Inc.

A Record of Topnotchers

NURSING LICENSURE EXAM:
2007 December - 90% Passing
2007 June - 100% Passing

CPA LICENSURE EXAM:
2006 - 6th Place, Jeremy O. Yecyec
2003 - 15th Place, Christopher Hernandez
1999 - 8th Place, Michelle Sala
1980 - 2nd Place, Lorna Estabaya

CUSTOMS BROKER LICENSURE EXAM:
2004 - 1st Place, Evelyn A. Castillo
7th Place, Jim Richard F. Bito
9th Place, Alicia A. Dela Cruz
2002 - 5th Place, Janeth B. Samson
2001 - 1st Place, Rolwin L. Estabillo
4th Place, Odylie Aniceto
11th Place, Charizma V. Manguerra
2000 - 5th Place, Lovelyn B. Samson
1999 - 7th Place, Roberto Castillo

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING LICENSURE EXAM:
2003 - 3rd Place, Gilbert O. Mendoza
1989 - 14th Place, Michio Severin
- 25th Place, Lael Aero
1980 - 7th Place, Rhomel Manipon (ME)
- 12th Place, Alvin Bocalan (EE)

ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING LICENSURE EXAM:
2003 - 8th Place, Charles Jessen A. White
2000 - 1st Place, Allan A. Salva

FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS EXAM:
1995 - 1st Place, Daniel Espiritu

BAR EXAM:
1992 - 8th Place, Ma. Divina S. Avalaya-Carandang
1984 - 3rd Place, Priscilla Bellazin-Padilla
1978 - 8th Place, Vivera L. Cudiamat
1974 - 8th Place, Hermogenes Liwag
1958 - 10th Place, Nestor Madrigueras
1957 - 10th Place, Bobby Borth
1953 - 10th Place, Manuel Hidrosaro
1952 - 3rd Place, Maria Luisa Mendoza
- 11th Place, Pedro Ribera
- 12th Place, Epifanio Gonzalez
- 16th Place, Nemesianus Javier
1951 - 7th Place, Isodoro Real Jr.
1948 - 3rd Place, Florencio Tancio
- 12th Place, Eduardo Cruhat
- 18th Place, Hayad F. Hadjee
1938 - 15th Place, Raymundo Jayme
1937 - 20th Place, Antonio Fernando
1936 - 5th Place, Artemio Copus

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Biliran cop faces murder raps for assault on solon's home

Blast kills 2 kids in Albay town

LEGAZPI CITY—TWO CHILDREN were killed and another was injured when an explosive device went off Sunday in Ville Hermosa village in the island town of Rapu-Rapu in Albay province, about two hours' motorboat ride east of this city.

James Ryan Bordeos, 6, died on the spot, while Heng Ta Chen, 10-year-old son of a Taiwanese father and a Filipina mother, died at the Tabaco Hospital in mainland Albay where he was rushed for treatment.

According to reports received by Supt. Joel Tadeco, Albay Provincial Police Office director, Monday morning, another boy, Henry Bordeos Jr., 8, was also reported injured in the incident and was rushed to the Tabaco Hospital.

No further updates on the boy's status have been given.

Bordeos also gathered from village officials said the children were playing near their houses in the village, when they came upon the explosive device and decided to "play with it." Bolreo said in a phone interview.

The exact type of explosive device has yet to be determined, but some of the crime operatives (here) have been sent to investigate the incident.

Ariane C Gamil, Inquirer Southern Luzon

SENIOR CITIZENS' QUEUE

Elders are grouped together across a rice retail store to avoid being pushed and shoved in the queue at the Barbon drain marked in Davao City. The residents said they started to queue as early as 1 a.m. in front of the shop; rice sold at National Food Authority retailers but the retailers started to relocate two kilometers around 7:30 a.m. The price of commercial rice in Davao City reached P51 per kilo last week.

Mining firm owner shot dead in Bulacan

CITY OF MALOLOS—ARMED men shot and killed on Sunday night the owner of a mining firm operating at the Bink-ubbo National Park mineral reservation in San Miguel town, police said.

Constantino Pascual, 57, president of Rosemont Mining and Development Corp. (RMDC), was shot while he was on his way home with his wife Zenaida after attending a Mass at the San Miguel town plaza.

He died of bullet wounds while undergoing treatment at Emmanuel Med Hospital in San Miguel.

Pascual was in the passenger seat of the family's Toyota Vios when the suspects attacked him at around 7:50 p.m.

His son Ricky, who was driving the car, stopped in a store and left alone his parents.

Police said four spent shells for a .45 caliber pistol were recovered from the victim's car and four slugs for the same firearm were taken from his body.

The incident came three months after Pascual survived an attempt on his life when gunmen fired at his car parked in his garage.

Recently, the company has been suspended for two years from operating within the Bink-ubbo reservation area on orders of then Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes. Carmencita Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

By Rolando O. Borrinaga and Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

NAVAL, BILIRAN—THE INTERIOR of Biliran Rep. Glenn Chong on Monday filed murder charges before the provincial prosecutor's office in Naval town against a policeman for alleged involvement in the November night assault in their home that led to the death of one person.

Chong's father Charlie, identified SPO2 Renato B. Saul as among the four assailants who assaulted him, killing two security escorts and wounding another.

"Saul, who was standing just a few meters away from me, poked his Armalite at me and was ready to shoot me," the 63-year-old father of the Biliran solon said Monday in a phone interview. He was subsequently hospitalized.

The two slain security escorts Alberto Portilla, a former village chief of Rosario, Naval, who was shot in the abdomen and at the back; and Amando Barcelo, a resident in the same town was hit in the back. Barcelo was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

Reynaldo was Jose Cuezo, a retired policeman, who got shot at the forearm and was brought to a private hospital in Tacloban City three days after the incident.

But, in an interview with reporters, Saul denied knowledge of the crime and even expressed shock over the incident. He said he was at home with his family when the incident happened.

However, Jaypee Garcia, the security guard who shielded Chong during the assault, alleged that Saul was wearing the same shirt he had changed his T-shirt when presented to Chong by Biliran police chief Senior Insp. Alfredo Saberonio.

Rep. Chong claimed that the attack was politically motivated but Provincial Administrator Eustacio Mangpal, Vice Governor Dominga Apacible and Saberonio refrain from making accusations this early.

"Unless he has incontrovertible evidence, I appeal to Rep. Chong not to make any accusations. Let the authorities finish their work," Dominga said.

Saberonio said he had asked help from the regional police director, Chief Supt. Abner Cabalquinto, to look into the case.

Cabalquinto has formed a task force headed by Senior Supt. Avendio Valle, director for operations of the PNP-8 and former police chief of Biliran, which would conduct an investigation on the incident.

Meanwhile, Saberonio denied involvement of the detainment of Rep. Chong, that the Biliran police chief should be held accountable over this latest series of harassment against his family and supporters.

The younger Chong had said he had been receiving threats through his cellphone, including one stating "your misery has already begun" sent four hours before the shooting incident, another one sent when the shooting happened and a third one sent after the incident happened.

Rep. Chong had vowed to ask for the relief of Saberonio as Biliran police chief.

His father supported the claim of his son. "I was there and got shot. They know that I am the father of my son whom they want for congressman and I have close base in Naval," Chong, whose family operates several businesses in the province, said on Monday. With a report from Marlon Mesaral/Correspondent

DBP boosts seaweed industry in poor Tawi-Tawi town with P5-M credit line

The loan signing and check release have been scheduled for June 12

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES has extended an initial P5-million revolving credit line to Sitangkai-based exporter Sitangkayan, giving the seaweed industry of Tawi-Tawi a much needed boost, the Philippine Development Assistance Program said.

In a statement, PDAP noted that Sitangkai, one of the poorest towns in the Philippines, is the single biggest source of seaweeds in the country, accounting for half of the country's total production.

Seaweed is processed to produce carrageenan, a major component in the manufacture of food products, such as gelatin. Carrageenan is also used in making toothpastes and for treating medicine.

"Extended under the Dare Trans One Product window, Sitangkayan will use the DBP credit line to boost its working capital and increase trade with importers from France in behalf of the seaweed farmers of Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi," PDAP explained.

PDAP had started to assist Sitangkai in 2000 and has been instrumental in the formulation of the Sitangkai Seaweeds Industry Master Plan, a medium-term development plan that will increase the income of seaweed farmers and improve their standard of living.

The Master Plan calls for the increase in seaweed production area in Sitangkai to 12,000 hectares by 2013 from the current 2,500 hectares, its total seaweed production to 27,000 tons a month from the current 3,000 tons, and its average farm income to P500,000 annually from P60,000.

Because seaweed can only grow in clean water, Sitangkai enjoys a competitive advantage over other areas in the Philippines and is in a unique position to take advantage of the growing global demand for carrageenan, PDAP said.

Due to this growing demand, Sitangkayan's deliveries to France have recently increased to 120 metric tons a month from the previous 60 tons, despite the doubling of the farmgate price per kilo of raw, dried seaweeds.

According to PDAP executive director Jerry Pacheco, the price of raw dried seaweeds has now reached as much as P50 a kilo, double the price two years ago when P500 began entering Sitangkai.

The loan signing and check release with Sitangkayan have been scheduled for June 12 in Zamboanga City as part of the festivities marking Independence Day.

In addition to the DBP credit line, Sitangkayan has also availed itself of guarantee financing worth P4.3 million through PDAP's Processing Board Industries and Market Enhancement (Primer) program, which is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency.

The guarantee financing for Sitangkayan is administered by SMARTSPECS, a Mindanao-wide secondary cooperative federation.

"The sleek turnover of both DBP and PDAP is a symbolic gesture of Philippines-Canada development cooperation for the development of Mindanao, particularly for the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao," Pacheco said.

Pacheco added that these development measures PDAP's role in facilitating the access of rural industries to mainstream financing institutions like DBP.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

Sayyaf leader held in Basilan

A SUSPECTED sub-leader of the Abu Sayyaf was arrested in Lamitan, Basilan on Friday afternoon.

Basilan police chief Senior Supt. Isabelo Maniquiz said the Lamitan police arrested Sitt Sanghul Ajih alias Sabin in Sacsac Boulevard in Barangay Matatag.

Maniquiz said Ajih carried a P600,000 bounty.

Julie E. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

■ COTABATO CITY

P10-wage hike for ARMM

THE Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board (RTWPB) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has approved a P10-increase in the daily wage of private sector workers in the region.

Rel. Col. Antonio Mariano, RTWBI labor secretary, said the new wage order mandating a P10-increase in the daily pay of workers in the region will be implemented this the month or 15 days after the publication in a local newspaper.

The workers will receive the pay hike July 1.

Erwin G. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ ROXAS CITY

Trader shot dead

UNIDENTIFIED man shot dead on Sunday morning a 70-year-old businessman engaged in buying and selling scrap materials in Barangay Cagay, Roxas City.

The suspects also took away P100,000 cash and valuables of still undetermined value.

Cagay Barangay Captain Arthur Aragon identified the victim as Pagsanjan Bartolome.

Aragon said the suspect in also-at-large Bartolome's 72-year-old wife Elvira on the head and left her unconscious.

Felipe H. Salino, Inquirer Visayas

■ PANGASINAN

Alaminos under calamity state

ALAMINOS City in Pangasinan has been placed in a state of calamity after tropical storm "Domeng" damaged property worth P228 million, or almost as much as the city budget this year.

In a press statement, Mayor Hernani Bacayo said the storm affected 30,145 people in 30 villages or about 40 percent of the city's total population, and destroyed 1,421 houses.

Bacayo requested the creation of Task Force Alaminos to help 3,000 families and 6,000 households with an initial budget of P400,000.

■ MISAMIS ORIENTAL

D. Lagbas, 56

REP. Benito Lagbas of the 1st district of Misamis Oriental succumbed to lung and liver cancer at 4 a.m. Sunday, January 26.

Lagbas is survived by his wife Portia and five children.

His remains lie at the Lagbas residence in Upper Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City and will be brought to his native town in Sagbayan-gon, Misamis Oriental on Wednesday.

Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Inquirer Mindanao

It's back to school, error-filled textbooks

Front page A1

bathroom, and insufficient discussion," the reader says.

"Accordingly and pursuant to the provisions of the 1987 Philippine constitution, existing laws, rules and regulations and as a matter of national concern and relevant urgency, all private educational institutions in basic education are hereby directed not to use the above-mentioned textbook series, until the same are revised and passed the content evaluation by the Department of Education."

One week before the opening of classes, the Lapus order had not been circulated to those who were supposed to receive it, according to Ms. Academia supervisor of Maribel School of Quezon City. By the time he has told, the books used in some 200 public schools would not have installed and continue to be sold.

"There's a house-to-house going on," Go says, suggesting that he fail the directive never left Lapus' office. His school, for one, has not received the order officially.

Go, who earlier mounted a campaign against textbooks in public schools, went on the warpath against the Phoenix textbooks in January 2003 after a letter representative offered them for use in his school.

He reviewed the 12 books, found them defective and forthwith called the attention of the publisher, who gave a much-lauded blue until media picked up the issue.

Criminal case dismissed

Phoenix president Alegria Abad Limbco on June 17, 2005, issued a statement saying she had submitted the 12 textbooks to the National Book Development Board (NBDB) and that correction books were being distributed nationwide.

On Nov. 24, 2004, Phoenix filed a criminal case against Go for libel, threats, or extortion, and a civil suit seeking P1.5 million in damages for allegedly destroying its "good name and reputation."

The criminal case was dismissed on Sept. 23, 2005. The civil action continues to drag on, for its resolution that is with Malacañan So. Gloria's out as well. Go wonders that two years after the cases were filed, Phoenix is seeking an amicable settlement, if only he would apologize, something he says he will never do.

But Go says that nothing has been done by the NBDB on the case. He suspects that it was because Limbco is a member of the board, which is headed by Dennis Gonzalez, son of Agnes Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who for some reason had licensed Go for his crusade even when the other was still a congressman. Go thinks that this situation is highly irregular.

A shot in the dark

Go says that reprint of the books in 2007, cited by the Lapez order, examined much of the errors that had been exposed and that a full-page newspaper ad, paid out of his own pocket, on June 22, 2005, talked, tongue in cheek, "Thanx dan Mel Bonus."

"Nearly hopeless, I wrote Secretary Lapus, asking him to intervene (in behalf of the thousands of private school students who have been using these error-riddled textbooks," he recounts. "It was a shot in the dark," he says, saying the letter to Filipino "caused a chorus."

Go was summoned to a meeting at the Bagbid during which the BEDS, which investigated the issue he had raised, exhibited its findings—that the 12 Phoenix textbooks, first published in 2003, were shot through with errors.

Phoenix lawyers attended the meeting, but instead of mounting a defense, dredged up the ridiculous one that the court had dismissed in an attempt to denigrate Go.

Lapus says he did not wish to be drawn in the controversy. "My concern is not that the books were erroneous," Lapus says. "But is today he says, he issued the May 19 order.

Unfortunately, the order never saw the light of day, at least as far as Go is concerned. The Phoenix books have not been withdrawn from circulation.

And thatsatic going back to school still merrily. And the same errors that have oiled the through the years.

A CAMPUS press freedom advocate joins a students' rally against [illegible] in Manila. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Nuggets of wisdom lost in translation

Front page A1

instead plunges of concerns they had leveled against him, which a criminal court had dismissed.

Although the Bagbid meeting narrowed his findings that the Phoenix books were erroneous, he thought it was an empty victory.

Whitewash

Secretary Ardi Lapus produced an order during the meeting pulling out the books from circulation. He was told by the director would be made public the following day. He says he has seen no evidence this has been done and the books remain in circulation, as far as he can tell.

"It seems there was a cover-up or whitewash," says Go.

Such setbacks in the midst of apparent triumphs are nothing new to Go, who has relentlessly campaigned against errors in textbooks in both public and private schools over the past years.

The crusade has attracted the attention of newspapers from Singapore to Germany that found it rest only hilarious but tragic that in the process of educating Filipino youth, nuggets of wisdom were "lost in translation."

In 2004, Go managed to get then Education Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad to recall the public school textbook "Saya Sitos, Ngayon at sa Hinaharap" (Isla Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) because of the errors he had found there.

It was the first time in the department's history that such a move had been taken, Go boasts, however, that, in fact, the book remains in use to this day.

Last year, Go drew attention in blunders in the first set of updated public school science textbooks funded by a P200 million concession-aire from the World Bank that had been released to students of elementary schoolchildren.

Correction to corrections

The Daylid subsequently released leaflets correcting the errors. He mentioned the leaflets and heard that they too, had blunders. He issued a "correction to the corrections."

The supervisor of Marian School, which is ranked in the wrecking class neighborhood of Novaliches and which has a population of 400 from preschooler to high school, has sent unexpected criminal suits from the publishers he had received except by the Phoenix ones.

Go has begun reviewing English textbooks released by the Daylid this year, as part of the process of updating books used in public schools. He says he had received copies of the books from people he did not even know, adding him to review them.

Choosing to look first at the materials for fourth year public high school, which he thought should be the toughest, he poured over "English Expressways."

Go says he has read 313 pages of the 326-page book. So far, the eagle eyes had spotted 575 typos and errors in grammar, usage and logic. He plans to issue his critique one of these days and was in forthcoming years its authors from Ateneo University and University of the Philippines.

Even the title of the textbook sounds weird, says Go. "Why not 'British Sophistry?'" he says. "Should it not be called instead 'Ways of expressing English?'"

Defective books revised

If Go lets out a laser-like focus on textbooks errors, it is because he feels that defective textbooks compromise children. He feels that his untiring brand of violence inflicted on the young are journey and ignorance.

"Textbooks that teach errors or promote statistical and misleading," he says.

"Textbooks that teach errors or promote statistical and misleading," he says.

"This is the starting frame he listed my decision to take up the windmills of my mind against the well-meaning advice of friends, relatives and loved ones, against even my own better judgment," Go says.

"The crusade against error-riddled textbooks has given focus and direction, purpose and meaning to my life," he says. "It blinds me day, it also makes me sustain the fight."

Go has published 10 full-page ads in newspapers in pursuit of his cause that had set his pocketbook back by more P1 million.

He says he receives consultant to his cause—"so much so Dennis is committed to losing friend."

"A more level-headed reader would be the first by Mother-cliff to, Wuthering Heights', I cannot live without my soul," he says.

He will need all the help from the Virgin Mary in his crusade.

Fernando del Mundo

'Wonder boy' never runs out of quotations

Front page A1

Marcelito is to write 120 quotations in his notebook in only two weeks last month, to the surprise of his parents.

Two years ago, he was featured in the Inquirer as a "Grade 1 dropout" because he was forced to repeat 1st at age 3, he couldn't stop do so and left off the roster of 60 countries.

He was a refreshing and inspiring story until the scandals rocking the country.

Mayor Belmonte

He'll be in Grade 4 on June 16 at Bonifacio School for Gifted and Talented Inc. But we are worried about the delay in the approval of Ado's scholarship," said his father, Adrian Sr.

Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte promised to support Ado's schooling last year and helped the boy's father to transfer to Ernesto Rondon High School in Project 6, Quezon City as a high school teacher.

But the scholarship is reasonable ready to Ado's parents curiously await a meeting with Belmonte on June 16.

Active in school

Four, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, the Marcelito couple, with pals in their homes, toward their belongings. half filling a 10-wheel truck, to Quezon City to send their only child to Manila to upon the suggestion of a parent whose son graduated here first.

Headway, which is recognized by the Department of Education, caters to students with an IQ of 120 and above.

The Marcelito couple rented an apartment in Quezon City and were given a discount by the owners, a chemist. They also received donations from a philanthropist.

Superior IQ

At Headway, Ado's psychologist team showed a very superior IQ of 144. In at age 5, he was placed in Grade 2.

A private sponsor paid for his tuition and the school's founder, then in Luz Bonifilio, shouldered the cost of his books.

"We were nervous at first because he struggled schooling his a while and he was the youngest in a class of 14," said Maxwell, Ado's mother.

Dancing, sports

Ado broke the notion that a person with a high IQ was usually either weird or nerdy by joining almost all activities, including dancing and sports.

At the end of the school year, he received 12 awards, including advance reader award, precocity award and most helpful and most industrious award. He became the best debater in school.

"Parenting in his studies, he could be a good leader in the future, though he is not a bookworm. His classmates and teachers call him their 'second teacher' as he asks like one," said the older Adrian.

Precocity gifted

The Marcelito couple learned from parents like them and from conversations here to him. He their child, called "precocity gifted" by some psychologist, until all aspects of his personality are fully developed.

Ado and Maxwell said they were aware that "many have big expectations of him," and that could break him down.

At some point, Ado felt in love with chess and met the Philippines' first grandmaster, Eugene Torre.

But on the morning of May 4, he surprised his parents with something written on a piece of cardboard, the first of 120 quotations.

Hunger a social meaning

One said, "Hunger it is social meaning," another says, "Leaders must make goals for the country not for themselves," and "Truth is an action word."

Asked by the Inquirer where he got all the quotations, Ado said, "From my school and from interesting with other people."

Keeping the habit of writing whatever comes in his mind, he wishes to have the quotations compiled in a book.

Last week, Ado wrote: "Some students think that what they are studying at present is difficult, but they are wrong. It is the future lessons."

MARCHILLA (right) with a playmate at Wiss. his scholarship promise.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAUL GONZALEZ JR. FOR PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Classrooms, chairs didn't reach poor schools—COA

Front page A1

ration of the agency's budget for capital outlay.

"The classroom shortage of the respective regions could have been reduced had the total amount of P997,796 million been utilized for specific purposes," said the COA, referring to the depressed schools.

But school division officials of Central Luzon (Region 3), Bicol (Region 5) and Southern Mindanao (Region 11) blamed the "inaccurate, unreliable and incomplete" data on instructional room analysis in the basic education information system by the implementation of the program in the least priority schools.

Reinforcement of concrete components with the private listings and the intervention of local government officials in the construction projects without due consultation with division offices were also among the reasons the school officials cited.

No monitoring

The report also highlighted the failure of the Daylid and DPWH officials to "strictly comply" with the coordination and monitoring guidelines for the construction projects.

In at least eight regions, including Metro Manila, 113 construction projects amounting to P44.128 million were found to be either substituted, unutilized or abandoned.

"The inability of the Daylid to coordinate with local government units or nongovernmental organizations and to monitor project progress have led to the construction of school buildings in inappropriate sites and insertion on abandoned projects," the COA said.

It further noted that 19.97 million worth of armchairs and tables were distributed to 2,777 elementary and 899 secondary schools that have adequate provisions in the last four years.

The auditorium failed to address the severe chair shortage as there is 2,794,000 chairs requirements, said the COA, as it noted an excess of P6.8 million worth of school furniture in public schools in 11 cities in the capital.

The surplus deliveries were found at Bulacan, Bilis Elementary School in Quezon City, to the school division of Pasay, Taguig, Valenzuela, Caloocan, Daig, San Juan, Makati, Muntinlupa, Manila and Marikina (DBM).

Some P22.8 million worth of school tables, chairs and armchairs distributed to public schools across the country were found to be "defective and inferior."

Common defects

In an inspection, the COA found the following common "defects" in the school furniture distributed to at least five regions:

- Timber surfaces of writing boards had splits, indentations and scratches.
- Writing boards were weak and unstable.
- Arm rests were not fully welded, bolts and nuts had no washers.
- Edges and corners of tables and chairs were not smoothed and rounded, which may cause snagging, damage or injury.
- Wire tables and chairs were already infested with termites and were broken.
- Plywood screens were substandard with finishing coats.
- Tables and chairs were too heavy for pupils to easily access.

NEWS

US keeping eye on shabu smuggle probe

American narcotics chief in RP hailed seizure, says PASG's Villar

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The United States Drug Enforcement Agency (USDEA) is monitoring the local investigation of the foiled attempt to smuggle P4-billion worth of shabu at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales, Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group chief Antonio Villar Jr. said Monday.

Villar said Jose Marchant, chief of the USDEA unit at the US Embassy in Manila, called him on his cellphone to congratulate the Philippine government on the huge drug bust[s] made last month.

"Marchant congratulated the government for being able to seize a big volume of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride). He said the USDEA was keenly watching developments," the PASG head said.

"The USDEA is particular about the banning of illegal drug trade[,] since[it] has the illegal drug trade affects peace and stability," Villar added.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) has yet to identify the syndicates behind the pseudoephrin, transport and trade of the 744.46 kilograms of shabu seized on May 27 and 28 and June 7.

Wait for a court order

In a related development, Villar said he had advised the PDEA to wait for a court order before taking custody of the drug contraband and burning it.

"I asked General [Dionisio] Santiago (PDEA chief) to relent and overrule the shabu because I don't want it switched with tawas (alum powder) or have any of it stolen and eventually sold in the market," he said.

There have been cases when shabu in PDEA custody was pilfered and sold by its own agents, he said.

Properly escorted

Villar also said he wanted the cargo "properly escorted" by civil or antidrug, government agencies and media organizations.

He confirmed to reporters that the cargo, destined for Hong Kong, was able to flee due, he said, to the "lapses" of some personnel at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and Bureau of Customs.

"It is very clear that Ang, as a businessman of the Freeport, was allowed to ship only cigarettes and liquor. When he claimed that the boxes found in his car contained computer parts, he should have been immediately held and not allowed to go. The boxes should have been opened in case. They were his business their know-hits," he said.

TEACHERS, TOO. It's not just students taking to the streets to protest rising oil use. Their counters, members of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, rallied yesterday along Espana in Manila's university belt to demand higher salaries and more reasonable work loads. The teachers also want class sizes reduced. AMA INQUIRER

State dep't cites Pinay as antitrafficking hero

By Cynthia D. Balana

A FILIPINO WOMAN HAS BEEN SINGLED out as antitrafficking hero in the US state department's Trafficking in Persons Report 2008 released on June 4.

A US Embassy statement in Manila said Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, executive director and president of the Visayan Forum Foundation, was among only 10 outstanding advocates from around the world who were recognized in the report for exemplary efforts toward combatting trafficking in persons.

The report read: "Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, a longtime advocate against trafficking and former political prisoner, continues to pave the road for NGO and government collaboration on anti-trafficking efforts in the Philippines and around the world. As the president and executive director of the Visayan Forum Foundation, Ms Oebanda works for the welfare of marginalized migrants."

Interviews years after she founded the organization to strengthen the rights of migrant women and children from poor areas in the Visayas, Oebanda manages five halfway houses and four domestic centers and will open three new halfway houses in 2008, according to the report.

Since 2004, the foundation has rescued and provided assistance to more than 12,000 victims and prevented victims of trafficking and has helped file 66 trafficking cases on behalf of the victims, the report added.

Oebanda is also the recipient of Anti-Slavery Award in 2005 and the Skoll Foundation Awards for Social Entrepreneurship in 2006.

US Ambassador Kenney A. Kormer congratulated Oebanda for the recognition, adding that the battle against human trafficking was a high priority for the US government and the American people.

Kenney also said development assistance from the United States contributed more than $1 million to support antitrafficking activities in the Philippines last year, including nearly $800,000 in financial support to Oebanda's foundation to operate halfway houses in parts throughout the country.

3-day Independence fair at Luneta

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND Employment yesterday announced there will be a three-day livelihood fair in celebration of the nation's 110th Independence Day on Rizal Park at the Luneta in Manila.

Labor Secretary Marianito Roque said the fair will showcase creative and practical novelties made by government livelihood program beneficiaries from June 10 to 12.

Roque said that the three-day activity would complement the agency's Independence Day Mega Job Fair, a one-day event offering some 15,000 local and overseas job vacancies to jobseekers.

"DOLE regional offices nationwide will also hold job and livelihood fairs at accessible locations in the country's various regional centers in celebration of Independence Day," Roque said. Abigaelen E. Ordoñez

Cops round up suspected abductors of PNB executive

By Alcuin Papa

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR General Avelino Razon yesterday presented the suspects in the June 3 abduction of Philippine National Bank vice president Fernon Murillo.

Suspected members of the Amado Inilanan crime group abducted Murillo in the early hours of June 3 on Quezon Avenue in Quezon City. The group held the victim captive until he arrested a P15-million ransom for his release.

The PNP will not allow "area players" to enter into the kind of criminal activity. They will suffer the same fate as the Amado group we have just effectively neutralized," Razon said.

After three days, Murillo was freed after a P3-million ransom was paid. It was after a series of police operations by the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response Force), team Haven Zeta police and Metro Manila police led to the arrest of 10 members of the Amado group.

Razon said kidnapping was now at an all-time low compared to the previous years.

Murillo's abduction, he said, was the fourth this year.

Arrested were Milsher Montes, Nino Cornagun, Criselo de Guzman, Alvin Lucinario, Armando Aquino, Reggie Reyes, suspected gang leader Florentino Amado, Edgardo Hernandez, Jocelyn Penullar and Reynante Almanza, who piloted the getaway.

De Guzman, who broke the window of Murillo's vehicle during the kidnapping, died of a heart attack while in the custody of Quezon City police.

Provincial commander Senior Supt. Napoleon Tiano said De Guzman was not an active member of the group when he died.

Recovered from the suspects were P859,000 in cash believed to be part of the ransom money, three handguns, an Ingram machine pistol, three vehicles and cellular phones.

2 share P182-M Lotto pot

TWO LUCKY BETTORS HAVE JUST become the country's latest multimillionaires after they picked the winning numbers combination to win the P182-million jackpot in last Saturday's SuperLotto 6/49.

Larry Cedro, spokesperson for the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), yesterday said one of the winner was from Cebu while the other placed the winning bet in Bataan.

Cedro said the winning bettors have won an 11-million-odds to pick the right combination of 31-08-12-14-24-38 which won them a total of P182,042,262.80.

He said the two winners, who have yet to contact the PCSO, will split the tax-free prize.

Cedro said that although the winners have a year to claim the prize, it was in better if they went to the PCSO office in Quezon City yesterday.

He also advised the winners to take care of their winning tickets.

"The integrity of the lotto ticket is very important in getting the prize. I suggest they put their signature on the back of the ticket as a security measure," he told the lucky ones over the phone.

On March 20, a bettor from Quezon City won P349,005,219.80—the biggest jackpot ever in the 33-year history of online lottery in the Philippines.

Aside from the top prize, a consolation prize of P86,000 will go to each of the 1,251 person who had five of the six winning numbers on Sunday's draw.

On the other hand, 6,427 lucky bbets won P1,500 each for picking four numbers out of the winning combination. P100 each will also be given to 101,374 bettors who got three of the winning numbers. Marlon Ramos

Aplus METRO
Editor Boner G. Dipasupil

Suspect in Comelec killings missing

MORNING WALK
Four young men enjoy an early morning stroll on the grounds of the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, where several flags fly from poles to mark Independence Day. (VINCENT MICHAEL ALVAREZ)

Cop under restrictive custody last seen on Saturday

By Julie M. Aurelio and Allison W. Lopez

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL Region Police Office (NCRPO) has created a task force to look for a policeman tagged as a primary suspect in the murder of two Commission on Elections officials.

NCRPO officer in charge Chief Supt. Roc Acuña yesterday said he ordered the formation of Task Force Amputuan to "surround" Inspector Amputuan, a policeman from Shariff Aguak,Maguindanao province in Mindanao, who reported missing from his room on Security morning.

The policeman was in the custody of Senior Supt. Go Ilee Co of the Regional Headquarters Support Group of the NCRPO based quarters in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City.

Police, however, clarified that Amputuan did not "escape" as he was not under detention in the police camp.

"As he is under restrictive custody technically he did not escape. As of now, he remains an armed officer," he said.

"He have been keeping Amputuan under restrictive custody under disciplinary rules that authorize the police to place personnel under restrictive custody while an administrative case filed against him is being heard," he added.

Acuña said he has ordered the investigation of PO2 Mark Pangit, Amputuan's police escort, to find out how the suspect could have left the police camp.

Amputuan was last seen at around 3:30 a.m. Saturday when he left his room to go to the toilet. He allegedly stayed in the toilet for two hours, but at 5 a.m., he was nowhere to be found.

The policeman was arrested in Shariff Kabunsuan on April 14 after he was tagged as the alleged gunman in the deaths of then Comelec legal department head Abraham Dolog and the man who recorded him, Melchor Magdadaro.

Dolog was shot dead in November while Acuña was suspended from on March 24.

But Amputuan was charged only in connection with Dolog's death as the Manila prosecutor's office gave the witness in the double killing protective custody here.

Meanwhile, the wife of Dolog has expressed disappointment and concern over Amputuan's disappearance.

"I told her to inform my superiors immediately if she notices anything unusual," Chief Insp. Bernardino Acevedo Jr. of the Manila Police District homicide division said.

He did not disclose the name of Dolog's wife for security reasons.

Liable

"I'm sure that National Capital Region Police Office chief Director Geary Barias will initiate a probe to see who should be held liable," Acevedo added.

On April 21, Amputuan was ordered relieved "for further investigation" by a Manila prosecutor. However, he was kept under restrictive custody pending the Philippine National Police's investigation of an administrative case filed against him for being absent without official leave.

"If a policeman is under restrictive custody, he is free to move within the camp as long as he under permission and is with his escort," explained Supt. Rhodel Sobrevilla, NCRPO spokesperson.

He added that Amputuan was also allowed to attend hearings outside the camp as usual as family emergencies provided he seeks permission.

"In the case of Obaniag, we are looking into possible lapses of our own police personnel and if there are, we administratively case of inefficiency or duty will be filed against them," he lamented.

Task Force Amputuan led by Chief Supt. Agapito Quiatchon has already coordinated with the Manila International Airport to check if the suspect flew out on any of the flights of airlines bound for Mindanao.

"We learned that a certain Shariff Amputuan, probably his wife, boarded PAL flight number 857 at around 12:55 p.m. Friday bound for Cotabato. But the policemen was not on the flight manifest," Sobrevilla added.

The task force also asked Aboitiz Shipping Lines chief of security, Ronald Aquino, to check their passenger list at the Manila South Harbor for Amputuan's name.

They also went to the Philtranco terminal in Pasay City at 8:30 p.m. Saturday to search for the missing policeman, but did not find him there.

Sobrevilla added that they also checked out Amputuan's report of Sidcorp in Mabalihin Village in Taguig City, Barangay Culiat in Quezon City, Quiapo in Manila and Pasig City.

Cardiologist stripped of license by PRC board

By Margaux C. Deiy

THE BOARD OF MEDICINE OF the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) has stripped of her license a cardiologist who is facing charges of negligence while she is found her guilty of unprofessional and dishonorable conduct.

The board, headed by its chair Dr. Florentino Dofitas, ordered Dr. Evelyn Abando-Rivera to surrender her certificate of registration and professional identification card as a physician and to desist from the practice of the medical profession "under the pain of criminal prosecution."

"The right to practice the profession bears with it the responsibility and duty of the to be enrolled to observe and honor the laws as well as the code of ethics of the profession," the board said in a decision dated May 12.

It added, "The respondent failed to comply with such mandate and even persist guilty by substantial evidence to have committed unprofessional and/or dishonorable conduct, and unethical conduct."

The Department of Justice earlier ordered the filing of homicide cases charges against Rivera and six other persons for allegedly failing to return more than P20 million worth of investments in a pyramiding scheme.

The case was based on a complaint filed by Rivera's father-in-law, Jovan, who said he was persuaded by his daughter to invest in the investments of the doctor's banking company, First Dominion Lending Corp. (FDLC).

Jovan added that despite his repeated demands, Rivera failed to return his money which amounted to P20.07 million as of January 2007.

Rivera also reportedly accused investments from his patients and fellow doctors.

Moreover, complainant claims that respondent spends more time running her money-lending business than to actually practicing her profession, and in the course of such business, she has swindled quite a number of people, doctors and patients aside from her very own brother-in-law," the board noted.

It added that the respondent disregarded the law when the professional she alleged criminal acts and failed to conform to the laws and medical standards "in which a physician should hold himself and to the society."

"She failed specifically to be a good citizen of the country and to conform to the laws reached to her profession," the board said.

It stressed that a doctor is highly regarded as an intelligent and righteous person of the community who shares his medical expertise for the welfare of the society.

"In this case, Dr. Rivera failed miserably in be a good citizen of the country by doing otherwise which is destruct of the medical profession," the board declared.

Rivera used to hold a clinic at the Makati Medical Center until the hospital suspended her clinic privileges last year after she failed to appear before a hospital body investigating the complaints filed against her by some of the investors in the doctor's lending company.

Jovan added that despite his daughter's failure to appear before the hospital body, the latter still allowed her to practice in the hospital.

More infant deaths reported in Makati hospital

By Kristine L. Alave

SEVEN MORE BABIES HAVE died of neonatal sepsis in the city government's run Ospital ng Makati (OsMak) since the start of the month, an official from the Department of Health said yesterday.

The seventh victim, newsbreg in Dr. Rick Tayag of the DOH National Epidemiological Center, died yesterday morning.

The latest deaths brought to 32 the number of babies who died in the hospital due to neonatal sepsis.

Twenty-five of the deaths occurred in May while the rest were reported from June 1 to yesterday.

Last week, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay ordered the partial closure of OsMak's delivery room and the evacuation of intensive care unit to give way to a cleanup.

Tayag, however, clarified that the health department has not yet found out the cause of the illness, a blood infection commonly found in babies less than 90 days old, in the hospital.

He added that it was still unclear if the infection came from the mothers or from contaminated equipment and hospital workers.

"We still can't determine if there is an outbreak. We are looking at the cases one by one," he said.

The DOH, along with medicine from the Makati City government, have been conducting an investigation of the "unusually high" number of neonatal sepsis cases in the OsMak.

Tayag said the health department was having difficult time verifying the cases because the DOH and the hospital's methods of reporting the cases were different.

He noted that OsMak put the number of sepsis cases from January to May at 181. Tayag said they have yet to verify the figure.

Cosmetic doctor set to file counter-affidavit

By Di Yap

COSMETIC DOCTOR MANUEL Calayan is set to respond to the new complaint filed by his Filipina-American patient who on the accused him of botching a penis enlargement procedure last year.

Calayan will file his counter-affidavit on Monday, the case lodged by Loraine Martinez, also known as Loraine Bracknell, who blamed the surgeon for the growth of a stomach cyst after a separate liposuction he performed.

In the complaint filed in the Makati Prosecutor's Office last week, Martinez charged Calayan with estafa and reckless imprudence resulting in serious physical injury and sought P14 million in damages.

Reached by phone, Calayan referred all of the lawyer's questions to his lawyers, although he did confirm that he would appear at the prosecutor's office tomorrow.

Angelina Ponsaa, one of Calayan's lawyers, said the legal team was still consolidating its defenses and making sure that all documents are in order.

In his complaint, Martinez said he underwent liposuction to remove the stomach cyst, as part of a "package deal" Calayan offered him, with the penis enhancement operation, for the procedure allegedly did not work, and the cyst spread and grew bigger.

Calayan, a doctor who gained fame for his celebrity clients, performed the liposuction on Martinez on Sept. 24, 2007, the same day he operated on the patient's penis.

Misdeeds

Martinez, a naturalized American citizen, said Calayan had repeatedly assured him the procedure was safe and convinced him of his expertise and success rate.

But after the cyst reportedly spread and grew, the man physician said he once learned from other doctors in the Philippines and in the United States that the correct method to remove a cyst was through surgical operation.

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LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING
Children, accompanied by their parents, pick out their school bags, notebooks and uniforms in Divisoria, Manila, where the items are sold at prices cheaper compared to those sold in department stores.

'Use sports complex funds for school rehab'

THE BELIEVING Elementary School in Quezon City, earmarked for demolition, will be replaced by a sports complex.

By Beverly T. Mabinidad

MORE THAN 300 STUDENTS of the Bahaginan Elementary School (BES) in Project 4, Quezon City, and their parents have pressed local government and education officials to use the funds marked for a new sports complex to rehabilitate the school.

Earlier, the city government announced that the school would be demolished to make way for the construction of a sports complex, citing the dwindling number of enrollees in the school in the last five years and the need for a sports venue.

It advised BES students to transfer to the nearby Pura V. Santos Elementary School (PVSES).

Students, parents and officials of the BES Parents-Teachers Association, however, have argued that the PVSES already has too many students.

They said that if Victoria Q. Fariñas, the Quezon City school division superintendent, and Hazel Feliciano believe it is really wanted to improve the quality of education in public schools, they should rehabilitate BES facilities instead of building a sports complex.

Paula Tagalia, BES PTA vice-president, said in an interview that they are appealing to officials of the Department of Education and the city government to renovate the school's 22 rooms and provide additional facilities such as a science room, computer room, library, property room, first aid and safety room and home economics room, among others.

According to her, the school's classrooms are dilapidated, with the city government and DepEd officials ignoring their requests for the school to undergo rehabilitation.

At present, BES has only eight rooms—one for its kindergarten students, three for its third grade students and two for second to sixth graders.

The two remaining rooms are used as a faculty room and a comfort room.

"We think that they intentionally neglected us so they can convert the school into a sports complex. They have been killing us softly for many years," Tagalia said.

She pointed out that if the school would be rehabilitated, this would lead to an increase in enrollment.

"Pura [PVSES] is overcrowded. We have been seeing their enrolment hold classes in their covered courts. How can one principal handle a total of 3,000 students if not all consider to Pura?' Where will they put us?" she asked.

Tagalia noted that the city government did not build additional classrooms at PVSES in anticipation of the transfer of students from BES.

The new sports complex is expected to serve the needs of 20 elementary and the city's 97 elementary and 47 high schools.

"We wonder how they will do that. The school's lot area is not that big," said Tagalia.

Parents of BES students said they do not need a new sports complex because the city already has the Amoranto Sports Complex which students could use for their physical education activities.

Fare discount not honored? Call DOTC hotline 7890

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSportation and Communications (DOTC) announced that its 24-hour hotline 7890 is now accepting complaints about drivers of public utility vehicles who do not give discounts to students.

Transportation Secretary Leandro R. Mendoza reiterated his call for drivers of passenger jeepneys, buses and taxis to honor the 20 percent discount for students and senior citizens.

Mendoza said in a statement that the DOTC has reactivated "Oplan: Balik Eskwela 2008" (Kaagapay sa Mag-aaral) to provide assistance to students during the opening of classes today.

Under the yearly program, security will be intensified in all transportation facilities such as seaports, airports, railway stations and bus terminals, while 24-hour help desks will be set up in major terminals.

Teofilo Guadiz III, DOTC Public Assistance Center chief, said mobile patrols would be deployed near schools and terminals to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and safety of students. The field personnel will be backed up by "assignment assistance organizations, and other public transportation groups," he added.

The DOTC hotline 7890 (or 63-7890 for long distance calls) is open 24 hours for transportation and travel-related complaints.

MRT, LRT see steady increase in ridership

By Riza T. Olchondra

MORE PERSONS RODE ON THE Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines 1 and 2 in the past two years, with ridership going up significantly by more than eight percent and five percent, respectively, data from both transport systems revealed.

MRT and LRT officials said they expected the number of passengers to increase further because of rising fuel prices and transport fare hikes.

"The ridership increases by about five percent every year, although it has increased by only three percent in the early part of this year because of the series of transport strikes," said MRT-3 General Manager Roberto Lastimoso. "But this is because we have reached our maximum capacity. When we add more trains, the number of passengers increase. We want to serve people on the move."

Based on MRT-3 data, the system serviced 23,600 passengers per hour per direction (php/d) when it started operating. Since then, however, ridership volume has been increasing because of rising fuel prices, prompting more people to stop using their cars in favor of the mass railway transport system. From the latest part of 2007 to early this year, the MRT-3 ferried almost 27,000 php/d.

Last year, the MRT-3 serviced almost 113 million passengers, compared to 105 million passengers in 2006.

Lastimoso said the steady increase in peak-hour ridership showed a consistent shift in commuting behavior, with more people opting for mass land trains instead of public buses and jeepneys.

While the consistent rise in passenger volume, the MRT management plans to increase its 350,000-passengers a day capacity to 600,000 depending on the government's long-term of the rail system from MRT Corp.

MetroBriefs

Free LRT, MRT rides on June 12

IN CELEBRATION of Independence Day, commuters get to ride for free on the Metro Rail Transit and Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2 on June 12. Officials of the mass rail transit systems said that their Independence "gift" will be in effect during rush hour—from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 6 to 9 p.m. "This is the first time we will be giving free rides to commemorate Independence Day following stop-and-go fare hikes," MRT General Manager Roberto Lastimoso told the media before the press. "It is a way to celebrate and also offer some relief from high prices of goods and services] to our commuters." In the other hand, Jinky Jorge, spokesperson of the Light Rail Transit Authority which manages the LRT Lines 1 and 2, said they offer four rides every year in celebration of the country's independence. Riza T. Olchondra

Students-principal row mars Quezon City school opening

By Beverly T. Mabinidad

STUDENTS OF MUNTI HIGH School in Novaliches, Quezon City, may not find an enthusiastic welcome when classes open today because of an unresolved row between them and their teachers on one side, and the principal and parent-teacher association president, on the other.

The issue centers on the alleged failure of the principal and the General Parents, Teachers and Community Association (GPTCA) president to account for more than P80,000 in funds collected from students as miscellaneous fees.

The students and faculty members are now seeking the intervention of the Department of Education (DepEd) to suspend the school principal, Dr. Modesto G. Villarin, as the case may be investigated by DepEd officials.

The complaint has been brought to the attention of the DepEd since November 2007 in a letter written by the president and vice president of Santa Maria High School's supreme student government (SSG)—Dharwin de la Cruz and Mary Grace Ferrer—to Jose Pilares, director of the DepEd Commission on Student Affairs.

The SSG officers have asked the DepEd to investigate what happened to more than P80,000 allegedly collected by the school but which was not used for the purpose for which it was collected.

They added that the school collected P375 each from 3,000 students of the school. Of the P375, P200 was supposed to go to the GPTCA, P50 for the student organizations, P75 for the school publication and P50 for the school ID.

According to the students, the principal did not turn over some P150,000 in funds allocated to the student government and student organizations.

They added that Villarin only released P50,000 in fund for the participation of the students in the National Leadership Training for Student Governments in August 2007.

Lavern Domingo, president of the school's faculty association, said the DepEd had already ordered the GPTCA to release the funds to the students following a preliminary investigation of the case and a probe action staged by teachers and students in March.

Don't make a mess in own backyard

ON TARGET
Antonio Taduo

ACTOR RUDY FERNANDEZ, who passed away recently, reminds me of an ugly incident many years ago involving him and former President Erap.

Rudy was a struggling actor in the '70s during the martial law years.

At that time, actress Nora Aunor was at the peak of her stardom and many male actors wanted to have her for a girlfriend.

One of them was Rudy. The young actor wooed Nora more than the other aspiring and rising actors.

When then San Juan Mayor Joseph Estrada, himself a movie star, heard about the young upstart courting his "lady love," he became jealous.

The new mayor allegedly beat up Fernandez black and blue.

Fernandez had a relative who had connections with medical line bigwigs who complained to the much-feared Metrocom Intelligence and Security Group (MISG) about the mauling.

An arrest, search and seizure order (Asoc), manual law enforcement in a warrant of arrest or search warrant, was promptly issued against Erap.

The then mayor was detained at the MISG for several days.

While in detention, Erap met then Philippine Constabulary Lt. Lt. Panfilo Lacson and his superior, then Capt. Reynaldo Berroya, of the MISG's police intelligence branch.

Erap and Berroya became drinking buddies while the former was in detention.

Lacson, on other hand, kept a distance from the mayor-actor because he was, after all, a prisoner at custodial.

Erap's close ties with Berroya and Lacson were born in those few days inside the MISG headquarters.

I should know. I covered the MISG, first for the Times Journal and then for the Bulletin Today, since rescued the Manila Bulletin.

See how fate has a way of playing with people's lives?

* * *

GMA television network had twice handle the sexual harassment complaint of a 23-year-old employee of its network subsidiary cosy-mill, otherwise it would lose credibility among its viewers.

The employee, who quit her job, said she was sexually harassed by a GMA executive while they were on a team-building seminar in a San Mateo, Rizal resort.

GMA network is stuck and mum, or slightly ahead of ABS-CBN in the ratings game.

Many viewers who disliked their loyalty from ABS-CBN to GMA network owner and current affairs, for one reason or another, might go back to ABS-CBN.

* * *

Sexual harassment in the workplace is very real. So real that a law has been passed penalizing offenders.

But legislators have not given their attention to the sexual harassment of housemaids by their male employers. Now this is more common!

Congress should pass a law penalizing male employers who sexually harass, or abuse, their maids.

* * *

I'm not a saint, but I have utmost contempt for those macho who make their female subordinates the object of their carnal sexual energy.

Why do they make a mess in their own backyard? Why can't they go elsewhere, if they have problems with their wives?

Any decent-burning lesbian or lesbo, or cute two-gang bati-r can do a neighborhood!

* * *

If you want to follow the activities of my fellow columnists, "Bombong ang Kay Tolits," please log on to www.pinoydeliver.com and search for manbongandtolits.

"Bombong" has been off the air (radio and TV) for two years now, but we're still helping the oppressed and distressed who come to us.

Britain loses 100th soldier in Afghanistan

LONDON—BRITAIN LOST ITS 100th soldier in Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion after a suicide attack in the south of the country killed three soldiers Sunday, the defense ministry said.

The head of Britain's armed forces and the defense secretary both insisted, however, that progress was being made in Afghanistan, and that the soldiers' deaths had not been in vain.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, the chief of the defense staff, said he hoped that the families of the 100 soldiers who had lost their lives would find comfort in the fact that "our heroes are engaged in a cause worthy and noble endeavour."

"Right across the country the international effort is beginning to effect real change," he said.

The influence of the Islamist Taliban militia was "waning," he added.

"These deaths, though hard to bear, remind us all of the extraordinary sacrifices they and their families make on our behalf—and of the price of failure if we falter in Afghanistan," Stirrup said.

"We can bear to owe them a great debt of gratitude."

Defense Secretary Des Browne, meanwhile, described the progress being made in southern Afghanistan as "remarkable," saying: "They have transformed the homeland of the Taliban from an area of lawless oppression and terrorism to a place of democracy and development."

"Quite simply they exemplify the very best qualities of the human spirit ... We must never forget that this extraordinary achievement, which makes us all safer from the scourge of terrorism, has come at a very significant cost to our brave servicemen and women, their families and friends."

The trio who were killed were on a routine foot patrol about one kilometer west of their base in the district Helmand province, when they suffered a "suicide explosive device."

There details raised the overall number of British military fatalities among troops since the 2001 US-led invasion to 100.

A fourth soldier was also wounded in the attack, which occurred at about 11 a.m. (06:30 GMT) on Sunday.

"Four soldiers were injured in the attack and were evacuated to the medical facility in Camp Bastion," said a defense ministry statement.

"Sadly one soldier was pronounced dead on arrival and despite the best efforts of the medical team, two of the soldiers died as a result of their wounds.

"A fourth soldier is currently receiving treatment for his wounds and is expected to make a good recovery."

There were of late have all been informed. Its ministry confirmed. They had sustained a 24-hour grace period before further details of their identities were released.

All the soldiers, part of the Multinational Security Assistance Force, were part of the 2nd Battalion the Princess Regiment.

Britain has about 7,500 soldiers stationed in Afghanistan, most of whom are in Helmand, where the Taliban have been waging a bloody insurgency since being ousted from power after the 2001 invasion. AFP

US FIRST LADY Laura Bush poses with US military personnel assigned at Ragsdale AB before her departure for Slovenia after a surprise visit to Afghanistan on June 8. AFP/PHOTO

Antarctica base gets 16,500 condoms before darkness

PHILLIPSTON—ONE OF THE last shipments to a US research base in Antarctica before the onset of winter darkness was a crate's supply of condoms, a New Zealand newspaper reported on Monday.

Bill Hendricks, the manager of the McMurdo base station, said nearly 16,500 condoms were delivered last month and would be made available, free of charge, to staff throughout the year to avoid the potential embarrassment of having to buy them.

The base only has a skeleton staff through the long winter.

"Most everybody knows everyone, it becomes a little bit uncomfortable," Hendricks told the Southland Times newspaper.

About 125 scientists and staff are stationed at McMurdo base, the largest community in Antarctica, during the winter months when there is constant darkness.

The last cruiser will leave on Aug. 20 and McMurdo's population will start to increase again in September when supply flights resume, peaking at more than 1,000 during the summer period. Reuters

Trash disposal becoming a big problem in Europe

HAMBURG, GERMANY—Naples' garbage—the plastic from the water bottles, the soggy copies of Internazionale magazine, the decomposing kitchen compost—has ended up here, waiting to be dumped into an old salt mine in the rock chasm of this fifty-fourth-century city.

For months, mountains of rotting trash have grown in the streets of southern Italy because the region has run out of places to put it. So for the time being—11 weeks, actually—a 30-car train will arrive in Hamburg every day after a 44-hour journey, each bearing 700 tons of Neapolitan refuse.

"We are doing this because we were asked to provide emergency aid, but we will do it only for a few months, not years," said Martin Blazon, the director of two of Hamburg's incinerators. "This is not a long-term solution. Italy will have to solve Italy's problem."

But Italy's problem has echoes in all of Europe, where Naples looks increasingly like a loud-smelling version of an unsettling future. And Hamburg, its historic Across the Continent, has likely set filling up public land in Europe's small spaces. Even it, like some for new ones. The problem has made it imperative for European nations to cut their waste.

By 2008, the European Union will require member nations to reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills to 35 percent of what it was in 1995. It has already begun severely restricting and reducing the use of landfills because of the fear of health and environmental problems they produce.

But none of that will be easy. Italy, Spain, Greece and Britain each will send more than 60 percent of their garbage to landfills. A recent study found that they, as well as Ireland and France, are unlikely to meet these long-term landfill targets.

"It's a difficult problem," said Barbara Helfferich, a spokesperson for the European Commission Environment Directorate. "But some countries are definitely ready before than others in waste management."

Germany and a few northern European countries have spent most of the last decade developing strategies to reduce and dispose of the waste generated by modern life: closing polluting landfills and inverting heavily to recycling and trash-burning programs. NYT

"Asia will be a major source of breakthroughs and advances"

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The WORLD

Edited by Lorenzo B. Ozaeta

Southeast Asia terrorist groups suffer big setbacks

SINGAPORE—THE DEADLIEST TERRORIST networks in Southeast Asia have suffered significant setbacks in the past three years, weakened by aggressive policing, improved intelligence, enhanced military operations and an erosion of public support, government officials and counterterrorism specialists say.

Three years after the region's last major strike—the attacks on three restaurants in Bali that killed three suicide bombers and 19 others, mostly people—American and Asian intelligence analysts say financial and logistical support from al-Qaida to other groups in the region has long dried up, and the more lethal are scrambling for survival.

In Indonesia, authorities have arrested more than 200 members of Jemaah Islamiyah, an Islamic group with ties to al-Qaida, since 2001. In the Philippines, an American-assisted military campaign has the Abu Sayyaf Group, an Islamic extremist organization with links to Jemaah Islamiyah, clinging to footholds in the jungles of Mindanao and southern islands, officials said.

There, one will soon become signs that the threat could resurface quickly.

A bombing at a Philippine airport in the southern island of Mindanao last last month killed two people and wounded 22 others. Peace talks between the Philippine government and the country's main Muslim separatist group are disarming to fall apart, which could ignite wider violence, building on deep anger about the country's military-led approach against Muslims. In February, the head of Jemaah Islamiyah in Singapore slipped out of a prison, barbecue roadway, Singapore's threat and disappeared.

But senior American officials, government authorities in the region and counterterrorism specialists say the most serious threats are on the wane—in contrast to American intelligence assessments that al-Qaida in the Pakistani tribal areas is energized and that regional affiliates like al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb are gaining strength.

"The government over here take it very seriously and, in my opinion, seem to be doing a very good job individually and working together to deal with that terrorist threat," Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, a former director of central intelligence, told reporters June 1 at a regional security conference here. AYT

YOUNG AND CAREFREE
A boy dives off a pier into a harbor at sunset near Belgrocon, Barbados, on June 8. AFP/2008

KATO AP

Japanese killer advertised stabbing spree on the Internet

TOKYO—A DISTURBED YOUNG man worker who killed seven people on a stabbing frenzy in downtown Tokyo had advertised what he was going to do on an Internet bulletin board, police said Monday.

At stained intersections placed flowers, sweets and comic-book images at makeshift shrine, new details emerged of how he kept a detailed log of his plans to wreak havoc in oblivion, the hub of Tokyo's comic-book subculture.

The assailant behind Japan's deadliest mass murder in years, 25-year-old Tomohiro Kato, worked on a temporary contract at an auto components factory in central Shizuoka prefecture, police said.

On Sunday, he drove a rented two-ton truck some 100 km from Isesaki town to Tokyo, swerving the vehicle into pedestrians before barreling out and clubbing at random with a survival knife.

He told police he was "tired of living" and had no motive other than to kill people—anyone he found.

Kato reportedly had a strong interest in comic book and video-game subculture.

In a school yearbook in which graduating students were asked to describe their personalities, Kato confessed a picture of an action hero and simply wrote the word "crushed" in English, reports said.

He admitted to police that he documented his journey on Internet bulletin boards posted hours his mobile telephone, a police official said.

"I'll crash my vehicle into people and if the vehicle becomes useless, I'll get out a knife. Don't kiss everyone!" said one posting hours before the attack, as quoted by Japanese media.

On a different site, an anonymous posting on May 27 was titled "Akihabara to Akihabara" and warned that an incident would take place imminently. AFP

US military supercomputer reaches speed milestone

SAN DIEGO—AN AMERICAN military supercomputer, assembled from components originally designed for video game machines, has reached a long-sought-after computing milestone by processing more than 1,026 quadrillion calculations per second.

The new machine is more than twice as fast as the previous fastest supercomputer, the IBM BlueGene/L, which is based at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

The new $133-million supercomputer, called Roadrunner in a reference to the state bird of New Mexico, was devised and built by engineers and scientists at IBM and Los Alamos National Laboratory, based in Los Alamos, N.M. It will be used primarily to solve classified military problems to ensure that the nation's stockpile of nuclear weapons still continues to work correctly as they age. Roadrunner will simulate the behavior of the weapons in the first few tens of a second during an explosion.

Before it is placed in a classified environment, it will also be used to explore scientific problems like climate change. The greater speed of Roadrunner will make it possible for scientists to test global climate models with higher accuracy.

To put the performance of the machine in perspective, Thomas P. D'Agostino, the administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, said that if all 6 billion people on earth used hand calculators and performed calculations 24 hours a day and seven days a week, it would take them 46 years to do what the Roadrunner can do in one day.

The high-performance computing goal, known as a petaflop—one thousand trillion calculations per second—has long been viewed as a crucial milestone by military, technical and scientific organizations in the United States, as well as a growing group including Japan, China and the European Union. All view supercomputing technology as a symbol of national economic competitiveness. NYT

WORLD BRIEFS

Algeria bombs kill 12, including French engineer

ALGIERS—Two bombs exploded on Sunday at a railway station and at Algiers, killing 12 people including a French engineer, diplomats and security sources said. It was the first time since the 1990s that a French citizen has been killed in political violence in Algeria, where al-Qaeda-aligned rebels have carried out a string of deadly bombings in the past two years. Sunday's attacks were the first deadly strikes in the capital. Reuters

35 miners trapped underground in Ukraine

KIEV—Five miners were found alive but 35 remained trapped underground Monday in a coal mine in danger of flooding after an explosion, interfax-Ukraine reported, as hopes for the miners' survival dwindled. The agency quoted Ukraine's Vice Minister as saying the two had been pulled out from the debris and brought to the surface alive but 4am minutes a source in Ukraine. The number of the other miners by seven rescue teams continued to 22 hadn't yet been walled. AFP

Italian bishop refuses wedding to impotent paraplegic

ROME—An Italian bishop has told a young paraplegic he cannot have a church wedding because he is impotent, despite his fiancee being aware of the problem, media here reported. Salvatore de Giorgi, archbishop-bishop for Bishop Lavinio Diocesan of Andria in eastern Italy, told Gig Tozzi Gallo, his wife Sunday. "As bishop, as priest I can celebrate a wedding when the lesser of unintended impotence as it is a matter for annulment" of the marriage. The 26-year-old groom, who took part in a civil marriage ceremony Saturday in Viterbo, has been paraplegic since he was involved in a car accident. The cause of the paralysis was learned from marrying the groom was not present at the ceremony. AFP

Greek quake kills 2, injures 125

ATHOLADHAS, Greece—An earthquake struck southern Greece on Sunday, killing two villagers, injuring 125 people and damaging dozens of homes, authorities said. Panicked residents ran into the streets and some jumped from balconies when the quake, measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale, struck at 1:25 local time (22:25 GMT) on the southern port city of Pylos. Reuters

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SPORTS

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58 days to the 29th Summer Olympics Beijing 2008

Pacman claims pound-for-pound No. 1

By Roy Luarca

MANNY PACQUIAO FIGHTS David Diaz on June 28, he will carry with him the awesome reputation as the world's No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter.

Formerly ranked No. 2 by Fight Matrix.com, the Filipino ring icon was elevated to the top on Sunday following the retirement of Junior Jeperides Floyd Mayweather Jr.via Interbits.

The Filipino ring superstar also used to hold Ring Magazine's pound-for-pound honors.

Pacquiao, the reigning World Boxing Council (WBC) 8-weight Diaz's WBC lightweight belt at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

A victory over Diaz will make the Gensan superstar the first Asian to hold four crowns in different divisions and the first Filipino to win the 135-pound category.

The 29-year-old Pacquiao also reclaimed as the world's best fighter in 2006, made his professional debut at 106 lb in 1995 and has been fighting top bantamweight since 2000.

Among Pacquiao's prominent victims are Mexican giants Marco Antonio Barrera, whom he beat twice, and Erik Morales, whom he defeated twice in their fight trilogy.

Pacquiao beat World Boxing Organization British super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe for the honors.

Another Mexican, Juan Manuel Marquez, from whom Pacquiao wrested the super featherweight crown in March 23 also in Las Vegas, was rated No.3.

Mexican WBC super bantam champion Israel Vazquez came in fourth, followed by unbeaten Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto, the WBA welterweight champion and Juan Calderon, super fly.

Rounded from seventh to 10th were Bernard Hopkins, Jelly Pavlik, Micky Wright and Rafael Marquez.

Meanwhile, Diaz moved 22 on Sunday in his hometown in Orange, where he has been re-training at the JABI gym since last month.

PACQUIAO: Bound Bruno for the home

Celtics make it 2-0

Boston survives LA Lakers' last-ditch fightback

BOSTON—THE BOSTON CELTICS SURVIVED A FURIOUS fightback by the Los Angeles Lakers to hold on for a 108-102 win on Sunday, the victory giving the Eastern Conference champions a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven NBA Finals series.

The teams now head to the Staples Center on Tuesday.

The Lakers will try again to be tearing Boston without squaring the series at 2-1 after staging a dramatic fourth-quarter rally that fell just short.

With the Celtics leading by 24 points and eight minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, the Lakers closed the Boston lead to 104-102 with 22 seconds left on the clock.

But with the capacity crowd on the edge of their seats, Paul Pierce sealed two key throws to give Boston a 106-102 lead and the confidence needed to seal their win.

"I wasn't happy about the way we ended the game," Celtics coach Doc Rivers said.

"But we're up 2-0. We've got to play through 48 minutes and I didn't think we did that.

"We got our wins when we got the lead. We started trying to make unwarranted plays instead of keeping it simple."

Pierce, who finished the game in the third quarter of Game One and was unable to play the next two rebounds with a dislocated rib to make a dramatic return, led the Celtics with 20 points.

Leon Powe, who averaged just eight points a game during the regular season, contributed 18 for the Celtics while Ray Allen scored 17 and Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen scored 17 each.

"I didn't really think about the injury to [Garnett] and Ray Allen scored 17 each. "

Helterbrand comes to the fore again

By Cedrik F. Tapas

A CONSISTENT JAYSON HELTERBRAND IS SEEING GIVE-AND-TAKE BACK TO HIS HANDSOME FORM.

With backcourt partner Mark Caguioa sidelined by headwinds on his right knee, Helterbrand rose to the occasion, leading the Kings to a 112-104 drubbing of the San Mig Coffee Mixers in the Smart PBA Philippine Conference Wednesday.

The flashy point guard jumped to a personal conference-high of 32 points and also hauled nine rebounds, four assists and a steal as Ginebra notched its fourth win in 6 outings to improve to 5-1.

That sterling performance also earned Helterbrand the Smart/Accel-PBA Press Corps' Player of the Week citation for the period June 2-8 over the likes of Alaska's Willie Miller, Red Bull's Gyrus Bugtai and Coca-Cola's Alex Cabagnot.

'TALK 'N TEXT'S Dar-Allado applies the one-two to Coca-Cola's Jason Dixon—and gets away with it—in Sunday's game won by the Tigers, 103-96.

"He has been performing consistent with them for us, including tonight," said Ginebra coach Jong Uichico of Helterbrand, who is averaging 17.7 points, 6.3 assists and 4.2 rebounds per game.

Helterbrand is the-middle, though, go way beyond the stat sheet.

"He [Helterbrand] wouldn't be his defensive attacker every game, which makes him a better player," said Uichico.

But that's not the only thing going for the Kings as they gun for a sixth victory against Purefoods in the main game at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Caguioa, who missed the last two games, may return as early as tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Welcome Dragons, who held off Purefoods, 102-97, Saturday to secure a two-game losing streak and improve to 4-10, clash against streaking Alaska in the first game.

The duos, who have been showing strength from the bench, Jeff Miller, are vying to extend their winning run to six games, after sculpting the worldwide leader Ali 21 Koppers, 16-04, on Friday.

6 RP shooters enter Asian schools meet

THE PHILIPPINES IS SENDING A SIX-strong delegation to Singapore for the inaugural Asian Schools Shooting Championships set from July 27 to Aug. 2.

Spearheading the team are Ateneo Grade-level Taguntao and Mico Dadila of Assumption College who will vie in the women's air pistol.

Also in the daughter of undefeated shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, who is also chair of the National Youth Development Program of the Philippine Sports Commission training association.

Dianne Rabonza of Quezon City and Gaisano Isla Victoria of Taguntao are entered in the women's air rifle event, while Steven Gonzalez, also of Taguntao, and Jasmine Hontanosas of De La Salle University will see action in the men's air pistol and men's air rifle, respectively.

The players made the grade after impressing PNSA grandmaster Marcopoint and Padilla during the 1st Mayor Freddie Tinga and the 1st Art Macapagal youth competition.

"I'm confident that we can produce future champions," said Macapagal.

Dadila said he plans to expand the program to the roundcycle as new models of world-class air pistols such this arrive. Cedrik F. Tapas

Shakey's volley TOC unfolds

THE RIVALRY BETWEEN HOST UNIVERSITY of St. La Salle and defending champion Hope Christian School comes to the fore in the Shakey's Girls' Volleyball League Tournament of Champions that unfolds today at the UST College Covered Court in Sampaloc.

La Salle, representing Valenzuela Village in the Palarong Pambansa, lost to a HCS-powered National Capital Region squad twice, including in the title match in Puerto Princesa City in April.

Still latter after their 2007 triumph, the Hope teamers of coach Jerry Sirvoid go into the tournament as the heavy favorites.

And La Salle coach Mabel Lozada, who will still have almost the same line-up in her 2nd year since they placed third, believes Hope is the team to beat.

Setter Anneiaco Rivera, Cristelle Grubio and hero receiver Melissa Gohing will lead Hope, which advanced to the finals after beating St. Scholastica in the Manila elimination.

Also in the tournament of champions Philippines Foundation and Central Philippine University of Iloilo complete the roster of teams.

Cedrik F. Tapas

Int'l Open: RP keglers take on Asia's finest

A GRACE FILIPINO CONTINGENT WILL HAVE their hands full against an equally formidable foreign crew in the 37th Philippine International Open Championships starting Thursday at the SM Mall of Asia Bowling Center in Pasay City.

Reigning world men's Masters titlist Biboy Rivera, three-time Southeast Asian Games Masters champion Paulo Valdez and defending JCP Open Masters champion Liza del Rosario will be at the forefront of the Philippines' campaign in the 17-day keglers' organized by the Philippine Bowling Congress in cooperation with Brunswick International.

The foreign challenge will be led by defending men's Masters champion Wu Jin-hong of Hong Kong.

Titles will be disputed in the men's and ladies' Open Masters, Graded, Amateur, Rookie and Senior Masters and boys' and girls' Youth Masters.

The top 16 Open Masters finalists will earn slots in the Philippine leg of the Asian Bowling Federation (ABF) Tour, set June 28, also at Mall of Asia. Both events are sanctioned by the ABF and the World Tenpin Bowling Association.

Keynoting the opening ceremonies set at 6 p.m. tomorrow is Sen. Sergio Honrasa, chair of the Senate Committee on Youth & Sports.

Also expected to attend the opening rites is Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez and Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and PBC president Jesse Mendiorosa.

The P2-million tournament, sponsored by the PSC, Brown Shirts, Globe Telecom, Coldspot, Foods Phantom, Department of Tourism, Pepsi, Asiroty, Sir23 and Otis Hotel Manila, is expected to draw players from more than 10 countries. Cedrik F. Tapas

DEL ROSARIO

HIGH-IMPACT RUN

Jhi Mitres, seasoned runners and first-timers passed the pavement during the recent Action & Fitness Live! Fun Run at the Fort in Bgnay City. The event, sponsored by Rebisk sauce, was a 5-km run targeted to the growing popularity of running as a simple, affordable and healthy exercise activity.

BY TOP CHOICES

Pagulayan the man to watch

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Mejia

ALEX "THE LION" PAGULAYAN, WHO won the World Pool Championship in 2004, is the man to watch in the Cebu leg of the Senior Predator Money Vibe Billiards Cup at the Annex of Ilid City Cebu on June 20 to 22.

Even though he played poorly in last month's Gamepoint 9-Ball Classic at the Genting International Convention Center in Malaysia, I'm picking the 39-year-old Pagulayan to figure prominently in Cebu City against a non-medaled field that includes the fabled Efren "Bata" Reyes and Ronnie Alcano, who are both former world championship runners-up while Ilo 3 Rosauro Tolango Jr. tournament and current world No. 1 Dennis Orcollo.

Not to be ignored, too, is Cebu native and three-time Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Warren Kiamco, who will be gunning his back-to-back wins after taking the inaugural leg of this nationwide tour at the Sta. Mall in Mandaluyong City last May 10.

* * *

Despite Pagulayan's loss to upcoming Manolo Gonzaga of Cebu City and sliding star Jowyn Bestovanny in the seven Magnificent 7 Winner-Take-All 9-Ball Invitational in Mandaue City, he's still managed to win the championship.

I feel that is well-placed to win in Cebu because he is playing on familiar territory.

Nonetheless last year, at the height of his billing and with the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, Pagulayan proved his critics wrong by winning, with a flourish, a major tournament in Cebu.

While Pagulayan is not yet in the class of Ilich of Times Ruiz Reyes, this is proving not to weigh. He dazzles pool circles with his relentless, often ronnie, ways to establishing himself as a name with the one pitch.

"I'm always nervous when I compete," Pagulayan admitted. "However, I'm confident of doing well in this Cebu event."

* * *

Incidentally, Pagulayan, who hails from Gingoog, Bukidnon, is also a name poker player. Just recently, he was in the 2009 Partypoker Isle World Pool Masters. Recall that a few years ago, I wrote an exclusive article about his excelling in poker as well by qualifying for the semifinals of a televised poker tournament in London which featured various movie celebrities.

Matchroom Sport president Barry Hearn, who is in his mid-50s, entered Pagulayan in the poker tournament during a break in the Filipino's campaign in Europe.

A longtime friend of sports patron Antonio "Tonhi" Payot, the billiardsman Sun said those "Men, to maintain off-your Sports, Just-see the heroes of British TV poker fame. His incredible playing style [can] be hands-on respect."

* * *

For the Viller Cup in Cebu City, a total of 64 topnotch players, including 20 who have been medaled, will be competing for [name and nearly P1 million in prize money.

The [title-defense event is organized by the Billiards Managers and Players Association of the Philippines and supported by Buggy Preparations, Payot Sports, Negros Billiards Stable, Stanley Superbrella and Cornelia Commodities. It is sanctioned by the Games and Amusements Board.

Other ranked players are veterans international Rodolfo Luat, Jowyn Bestovanny, Jhoeven Pena, Raoul Gallego, Carlo Biado, Randy Jakosalem, Dennis Alcano, Elmer Haya, veteran players Baldwin Ando and Mary Ann Bauzo and Viller Cup Sir leg Sipag at Tiyaga division winner Susan Pelea.

Those who made it via the "Search for the Sow Billiards Idol" qualifying tournament held last week were Rene Dita David, Marlon Pelita, Arlene Chua and Mimelo Tanatar.

COMMENTARY

Dejadistas cash in on Big Brown's dismal Belmont Stakes run

By Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—JUSTIN STEELE before De Tass won Saturday's 2,400-meter Belmont Stakes, a confident Danny Boy-down was already stabbing the air with his fists.

And when the 30-1 longest shot on the board crossed the wire, Boy-down waved his fists even more excited he took out on the unbelievers' misery of the Belmont's 140th running at the show of his financial kabobayan.

Ano Steele said he was left. Without Boy-down, Santa Sy, Bo Powers, Tony Alvarado, Mario Rodriguez, Jockey Boy Bonta, and other ridiculously-named Boy-ing Gambles, how can others, back all bet on Big Brown to win.

Big Brown not only failed to secure the Triple Crown, he finished sixth and last.

His dismal showing shocked the 100,000 fans in attendance at Belmont Park in Elmont, New York, and millions more watching on TV and betting at off-track satellite wagering stations, including Sacramento's Golden Gate Fields.

But trusting De Tass proved lucrative for fans-tatoos, who may become a few thousand bucks in Manila, and the other "dejadistas."

Rick Dutrow—Boy-ou know him as trainer, not the rough racing fans nickname to—paid $179, $28 and $14.80 to Boy-ding 5-2 favorite Boy-ond Compare up Denis of Cork, Aqueduct and Beasley's Hero finished in second and third.

Thus, the Belmont time lived up to its billing as the fastest because of racing for another year.

There are now 11 horses since 1978 that have won the first two legs of horse racing's Triple Crown—the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness—only to lose the Belmont.

Affirmed, who had a classic confrontation with Alydar in all three races, was the last to win the Triple Crown 30 years ago.

Speculation is that's running conquest today Big Brown failed to deliver.

Published reports say it was because Big Brown did not have his usual dose of steroids for the Belmont. Steroids are legal in all Triple Crown legs.

Picture us: who would bet? sunday, out of believe-ness, if you missed hear getting our stories for the several days, said the smokers in Boardwalk's group.

Meanwhile, some experts say that the 55-5-1 horse, assessed in a six-pound New York this time of year, also contributed to the defeat.

Others say Big Brown's injury in his left hoof from last season without Run his season and every-one to believe.

But Big Brown's trainer, Rick Dutrow, Jr., told the Associated Press he did not believe the injury was a factor in the loss. He also said jockey Kent Desormeaux "rode a perfect race" by pulling up the horse in the stretch.

"It reminds us now like Run did five right thing," Dutrow said. "When they turned for home, everything went right."

He said despite the setback, he was still proud of Big Brown's accomplishments.

"We did really good with him," Dutrow said. "He didn't get the Triple Crown, but we got the Derby and the Preakness, and that was great."

The Associated Press said in the next 48 hours, a decision could be made to retire Big Brown, whose breeding rights were purchased recently for more than $50 million by a stud farm.

Nadal bulldozes Federer in final

Bags 4th straight French Open title

PARIS — IN THE END ROGER FEDERER, like the incandescent crowd at Roland Garros, had no choice but to salute Rafael Nadal.

The irrepressible Spaniard put a dull-shirted Federer firmly in his place with a brutal 6-1, 6-3, 6-4 demolition to complete the most lopsided French Open men's final victory by 21 years.

Nadal possessed his aura of irrefutability in devastating style to take his place alongside Björn Borg as the only men to have won four successive French Open titles since the tournament went professional in 1925.

After the rain burst 40 minutes destruction, even Nadal was unbothered to celebrate his triumph and told Federer during the presentation ceremony: "I'm sorry for that final but you played well. I want to thank you for your attitude on the court."

A depressed Federer added: "I would have hoped to do better than four games but Rafael is very, very strong. He dominated this tournament like maybe no one before except Borg, so congratulations Rafa."

Nadal's victory over the world number one doubled off the more dominant men's French Open campaign in history. Not since Borg's run to the 1980 title had a man won the tournament without dropping a set.

Like a runaway bulldozer, Nadal has flattened anyone and anything in his path at Roland Garros this year. Whether playing an in-form Novak Djokovic in the semifinals or Federer, the Spaniard made no allowances for reputation as he extended his perfect record at the claycourt major to 26-0.

As Nadal once again basked in his moment of glory, Federer could only brood over another botched campaign in Paris.

To compound his misery, the 12-time grand slam champion also raked up some forgettable landmarks. The world number one became the first man to lose three finals in a row in Paris and suffered his first 6-4 set loss since June 1999.

Federer, looking to complete a career grand slam, had swaggered on to court with great expectations of inflicting his lopsided 1-6 claycourt record against Nadal.

A streak of foreboding set in within three minutes of the start when Nadal broke the Federer serve in the opening game as the Swiss pair filed a forehand long.

Throughout the first Nadal leapt in the air accentuating his beguiling topspin, hammering the ball relentlessly into the corners and stretching his opponent to the limit.

A banner in the crowd proclaimed "Super Rafa" and it did not take Federer long to discover that he was, indeed, being up opponent from a different planet.

Hero were left gasping and Federer was left reeling when in a sequence of six games from 2-1 down in the first set, he managed to win only three points.

Such was Nadal's command of Centre Court, it was difficult to believe that he was lacking a man who is often thought to be the genuine player to have picked up a tennis racket.

The 22-year-old Spaniard conjured 46 winners on Sunday and made Federer's life a total misery as only seven unforced errors flew off his racket.

In time, Federer would do well not to read the statistics from the match as it could prove to be a painful experience. He faced break points on all but one of his 11 service games.

"I didn't expect a match like this. I played an almost perfect match. I didn't believe this match," said Nadal.

Reuters

ROGER Federer, Downhearted,

RAFAEL Nadal Perfect record at claycourt major

Leonard tops St. Jude with playoff birdie

SAM Tseng smiles after becoming the second youngest LPGA major winner.

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE — American Justin Leonard gave himself a perfect lesson for next week's US Open, and the Ryder Cup in September, by winning the St. Jude Championship in a playoff on Sunday.

The 35-year-old, who has not played at the Ryder Cup since hitting a 45-foot putt to seal victory for the US at Brookline in 1999, clinched his 12th PGA Tour title at the second extra hole.

After squandering a one-stroke lead with two regulation holes remaining at the TPC Southwind, Leonard edged out Australian Robert Allenby and Masters champion Trevor Immelman of South Africa with a 15-foot birdie putt.

"I know coming in here the first way for me to prepare is to gain confidence by playing well and do those little things in my practice session that I may need for next week," Leonard said, repeating after sealing victory at the par-three 11th.

"I would say in that department, I did a pretty good job. I feel like I've been playing some pretty good golf for the last eight, nine months but you can't always justify changes and good playing with results.

"When you can, when you win a golf tournament, you have a really bold one to shut that up and take a lot of satisfaction.

"And this puts me in great position to make the Ryder Cup team," he added, referring to the Sept. 19-21 showdown with Europe in Louisville, Kentucky. "For the last nine years, I've been looking forward to one.

Reuters

Taiwanese teen cops LPGA Championship

HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND — Taiwanese teenager Yani Tseng made her first LPGA Tour victory a memorable one from day, capturing the LPGA Championship at the fourth playoff hole.

Tseng sank a six-foot birdie putt on the fourth hole of sudden death to win the $2 million tournament, the second major championship of the season.

Filipino Jennifer Rosales shot a 72 and ventured up on 287, 11 shots off Tseng and Hjorth.

"I did it," beamed Tseng, who became the first rookie to win a women's major since South Korea's Se Ri Pak won the same championship in 1998.

"To win my first LPGA title, and a major is almost unbelievable," added Tseng, who turned pro in January of 2007 and competed on the Asian tour, where she won the EGE Women's Indian Open.

She also won a tournament on the Canadian women's tour last year, and earned her ES LPGA tour card by finishing ninth at the final qualifying tournament.

Tseng became the second-youngest golfer to win an LPGA tournament.

Morgan Pressel, then 19 years and 28 months old, won the Kraft Nabisco Championship in 2007.

The 19-year-old wrestled the four extra holes to edge Maria Hjorth of Sweden, who also finished at 12-under 276. Tseng posted a final-round 68 and Hjorth carded a 71.

"I had four very good chances to make birdies, for none of the putts would go in," Hjorth said. "Congratulations to Yani."

After the pair parsed the first three holes of the playoff, Tseng calmly sank the putt to claim victory at Bulle Rock Golf Course.

"I was very nervous. It was my first LPGA playoff. I told myself, it is just like in the amateurs — relax," said Tseng, whose stellar amateur career included four victories in the United States and 33 in international triumphs.

World No. 11 Lorena Ochoa and Australia Karrie Webb were the joint third at 11-under, both carding 71.

Ochoa was vying for her third major title to a one, while the 37-year-old Scotswoman, who last month announced she will retire at the end of the year, narrowly missed her 11th major title and fourth LPGA Championship crown.

Laura Diaz (70) finished at 10-under 278.

AP

Kitajima sinks 200m breast world mark

KOSUKE Kitajima Still in top form at 25

TOKYO — A DAZZLING WORLD record by Kosuke Kitajima could secure Japanese swimmers the right to dominate other tournaments they use as this year's Beijing Olympics.

The double Athens Olympic champion shattered the men's 200-metre breaststroke record at the weekend wearing one of Speedo's controversial new LZR bodysuits.

Japanese officials now appear ready to allow their athletes to don the supposedly swimsuit makers Mizuno, Descente and Asics for Britain's Speedo-led August's Beijing Games.

"We are thinking of giving the swimmers the freedom to choose," Japan Swimming Federation (JSF) executive director Kazuo Sano said.

Kitajima set out as a man of two minutes, 9.31 seconds in Tokyo on Sunday to take almost a second off the previous record held by American several Brendan Hansen.

Reuters

POLISH midfielder Dariusz Dudka (background) and Polish defender Marcin Wasilewski fight for the ball with German forward Lukas Podolski during their Euro 2008 Championships Group B football match.

Germany, Croatia roll on at Euro

VIENNA, AUSTRIA — THE GROUP favorites continued to roll at the European Football Championship on Sunday and the co-hosts continued to lose.

Three time European champion Germany, the team considered by many to best at this year's competition, took the lead in Group B by beating Poland 2-0 in Klagenfurt for its first win at the continental tournament since the Euro 1996 final. Lukas Podolski scored a goal in each half.

Co-host Austria, which is the lowest ranked team at No. 95, lost to Croatia 1-0 despite some solid play in the second half in Vienna at Ernst Happel Stadium, the venue for the final on June 29. Ivica Mornic scored the only goal from the penalty spot in the fourth minute.

"This is the worst possible start you can have in an opening game of a tournament," Austria coach Josef Hickersberger said. "For the first 30 minutes, the team wasn't playing well, we were nervous. But after that, we followed our tactical plan and we did it well. We were dominated the second half."

Portugal victory

Another favorite, Portugal opened its campaign with a 2-0 victory over Turkey on goals from Brazilian-born defender Pepe and substitute Raul Meireles on the first day of the competition Saturday in Basel, Switzerland.

Co-host Switzerland, however, got off to the worst possible start in Basel when it lost 1-0 to Czech Republic in the other Group A game played at the other Swiss venue in Basel.

Milan Baros scored the only goal from the penalty spot in the 54th minute.

Reuters

SPORTS

Archers eye Final 4 slot vs Cards

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By Jeannine W. Pays

JUST THREE DAYS AFTER DISposing its fiercest foe, La Salle heads into the next round more confident of its own recruits.

The Green Archers set out to seal a spot in the Final Four against the Mapua Cardinals in the quarterfinals of the NCAA Playing "F" for Season basketball Cup at 2 p.m. today at The arena in San Juan.

With team star Al Cenon sidelined by an injury, the Archers turned to rookie Hybrid Baginding in a key match for a 78-73 comeback triumph over rival Arrows last Saturday to take Group B with a 6-1 record.

The Blue Eagles, despite falling to third with a 4-3 card in Group A, will still advance to the quarterfinals with a victory against unpredictable Adamson (6-5).

University of the East and Jose Rizal University will open the four-game bill at 12 noon, while San Beda will clash with Far Eastern University at 4 p.m.

Against the Eagles, the Archers encountered a tough Arrows in LA Revilla and Baginding stepped up along with Ryan Buenafe, Jeff Bacaron and James Mangahas.

The Eagles lit their own with guard Chris Tiu and top rookie Ryan Buenafe combining for 38 points.

ATTACKED: Michael Vincent Bahlen finds himself trapped by the defense put up by Jhon Ambi. Rico Maierhofer, David Joshua Webb and James Mangahas of La Salle in Saturday's game won by the Archers, 78-73. JOHN PANDAY

While the Archers drew a huge boost to end of their elimination campaign, the Lions will try to rebound from their first loss in seven games.

Led by Ojie Mercar and Nonoy Icdicoy, the Lions strolled to second behind La Salle following a surprising 67-62 overtime loss to unbeholden San Sebastian last Wednesday.

And the odds are even between the back-to-back NCAA champion Lions and the Tamaraws, who have been running strong behind Mac Steward and JR Cortuvilla.

Even the Warriors, who ruled Group A with a 5-2 slate, know how much the Mapua-based squad has improved after dropping to 64-81 decision to the Tamaraws last week.

Jeannine W. Pays

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Vera keen on fighting in Manila; rematch off

By Jose Manuel

LONDON—KEITH BARRACKS MEDIUM MAking out a quick rematch, Brandon Vera's thirst to redemption would have to wait.

The Filipino-Indian firm, who lost via a controversial first-round technical knockout to Heavyweight Champion Lyoto Machida in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) Bellator, is left hoping that UFC president Dana White will bestow to his word.

While announced during the post-fight conference that the Philippines is one of the UFC's target markets outside the United States, Britain and Canada.

"Well, definitely come to the Philippines," said White, who helped train the island-world auto insurance into a billion-dollar empire with fights viewed in at least 170 countries.

"I kept telling them to bring the UFC to the Philippines any time soon because I know Filipinos love the UFC."

As the only Filipino with a fight contract with the UFC, the 30-year-old Vera is elated by the possibility of UFC fights being held in Manila.

"I'm open to fighting in the Philippines," said Vera, a crowd favorite for his down-to-earth antics and endearing top. "It would be great if I win in front of my countrymen."

Raised by his father Ernesto Sr. and grandmother during in Norfolk, Virginia, the 6-foot-3 superstar and tennis expert visited and held about-to-Orlando three times last year.

Vera, who can pass off for a tennis star, speaks fluent Filipino and prefers Philippine dishes.

In one of his visits to Manila last year, Vera trained his entire and played the role of an assistant in a heated tennis contest.

Entering the octagon with the song "Reborn" by Black Eyed Peas score bursting in the background, Vera got a standing ovation from the estimated crowd of 24,000 to London's O2 Arena Saturday night.

CROWD FAVORITE Filipino-Brandon Vera

Fights fans, however, booed as he proved when Machida was pronounced winner by TKO. Referee Dan Miglietta prematurely stopped the contest with 20 seconds left in the first round.

Miglietta thought that Vera, making his UFC comeback after being sidelined by a broken left thumb for eight months, was about to throw in the towel after Machida pinned him down and rained punches on him.

After the fight, Vera immediately sought a rematch—a fight Machida is not inclined to grant.

"He must work his way up and live up to his hollow he could fight me," Machida said.

Machida improved his MMA fight record to 11 wins, three losses and a draw while Vera absorbed a second consecutive defeat after winning his first eight fights.

The next edition of the UFC made in Las Vegas next month.

Men's Health All-Terrain Race on Father's Day

THE THIRD EDITION OF THE MEN'S Health All-Terrain Race is set June 15 at the Timberland Heights in San Ildefonso Bulacan.

Participants will pit skills in a tough and tricky trail run and a 20-km bike race coinciding with Father's Day.

The obstacles include running through gravel, sand, and sloping hills.

Interested parties may register at www.menshealth.com.ph.

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Globe

BSP closely watching banks' currency deals

Fluctuations in peso-dollar exchange alert monetary authorities

By Doris C. Dumlao

RECENT SWINGS IN THE PESO-DOLLAR EXCHANGE AT the Philippine Dealing System have prompted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to take a closer look into banks' currency deals with overseas investors.

The BSP recently required banks to report their non-deliverable forward (NDF) transactions with offshore investors on a weekly basis, including the agreed exchange rate, volume and the maturity of transactions.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a non-deliverable forward contract is a foreign currency financial derivative instrument.

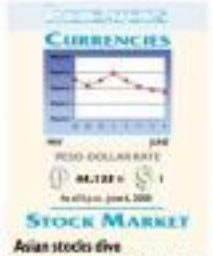
An NDF differs from a normal foreign currency forward contract in that there is no physical settlement of two currencies at maturity further, based on the movement of two currencies, a net cash settlement will be made by one party to the other, OECD explained.

As the new measure coincided with the peso's weakening trend against the US dollar, there have been speculations in the market that this could be a prelude to the central bank's eventual move to cap NDF deals by instructing banks to include such transactions in the computation of allowable foreign exchange stock or overbought limit.

In an e-mail last Friday, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said NDF transactions could indicate "the level of risk appetite of investors for emerging markets such as the Philippines."

"These transactions could cause volatility in the spot onshore market," Tetangco explained. "For these reasons,

BSP TO



Asian stocks dive

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCKS FELL AND government bonds climbed yesterday after oil prices surged to a record high of $139 a barrel and data suggested the world's largest economy is creeping perilously closer to stagflation.

"The factors depressing the market, namely inflation and the global economic downturn, are still going to [set] in deep," said Lee Young-ho, a chief analyst at Daewoo Securities in South Korea.

The US unemployment rate posted its sharpest one-month rise in 22 years, figures on Friday showed, increasing fears of a replay of the 1970s when a spike in inflation coincided with a period of stagnant economic growth.

In their biggest one-day increase ever, oil prices jumped almost $11 on Friday, sparking the largest single-day selloff on Wall Street since February 2007.

The combination of soaring energy prices and signs of economic instability reverberated in Asian stock markets, which were destroying to recover from double-digit inflation rates to emerge as one of the region

Japan's Nikkei finished 2.1 percent lower—its largest decline in two weeks.

The MSCI index of Asia-Pacific stocks outside of Japan fell 1.1 percent by mid-afternoon, taking over its gains losses to +1.2 percent.

ASIAN BI

BACK TO BLACK

For PNB, no more peaks and troughs

By Michelle V. Rosca

(first of two parts)

PHILIPPINE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BANK IS ADDED FOR AN IMPRESSIVE corporate turnaround story. But the Philippine National Bank is often cited as one of the best examples. Looking back at the history of PNB, one may describe it as a roller-

FEATURE

coaster ride, dramatic

NEW FACE OF PNB: Success appears to have left its mark on the bank's building along Dasmariñas Paseo de Roxas in Paseo City.

Established in 1916 with headquarters in Iloilo, Iloilo, PNB originated as the primary state-owned bank mandated to cater to the government's developmental efforts. The bank opened from its three operating to help the agriculture sector boost production to meet growing

turned by slumps and recovery.

This time, however, the management of PNB is bent on making the recovery experiment one.

Following the recent divestment of the government's entire stake in the bank, observers say PNB is on its way to become one of the toughest forces to reckon with in the country's banking industry.

Full privatization of PNB freed it from its developmental role, which was partly fulfilled by extending loans to the government's priority sectors. Privatization is said to have given its management the freedom to run the bank as any private corporation solely should be run—with the goal of delivering sustained earnings for its shareholders.

global demand for Philippine crops.

In 1948, PNB began to oversee the country's issue of currency notes, the sole depository of government funds, and the clearing house of the banking system. But these services ceased when the Central Bank of the Philippines was established in 1949.

PHILIPPINE BI

Government urged to tighten reins on Pagcor

EMERGING SUSPICION THAT THE STATE has been being potentially huge revenues allegedly due to a state-owned gaming firm's non-payment of tax laws has led to calls for the government to tighten its system of collecting taxes from Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Pagcor has been exempt by the 35-percent corporate income tax and 12-percent value-added tax since Republic Act No. 9334 took effect in 2005.

Republic Act No. 7656, implemented in 1993, also mandates Pagcor to remit a 5-percent franchise tax on its gross earnings, as well as 50 percent of its gross revenues after franchise tax, to the government.

But according to the National Tax Research Center (NTRC), Pagcor has only been including income from regular gambling games to compute its 5-percent franchise tax and the 50-percent revenue share of the government.

Other sources of income—such as Bingo, internet gaming, licensing of privately operated casinos, and franchising of its Bingo operations, among others—have been excluded from the computation of gross revenues.

The NTRC, an attached agency of the finance department tasked with conducting

GOVERNMENT BI

Moody's maintains positive outlook on RP

MOODY'S INVESTOR SERVICE IS maintaining its positive ratings outlook on the Philippines, despite a slippage in its goal of a balanced budget this year, one of the agency's senior economists said on Monday.

"[The Philippine government has] pushed back the balanced budget target, but there is still overall fiscal restraint," Moody's senior vice president Tom Byrne said in a telephone interview "[Officials] are still not blowing the budget. The positive outlook is still the outlook for the Philippines."

The government said earlier this month that it was pushing back the goal of a balanced budget to 2010 from this year, and that it expected to end the year with a shortfall of about P75 billion ($1.7 billion), or about 1 percent of GDP.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered targeted subsidies to shield the poor from surging inflation on top of a government infrastructure building program aimed at preventing the economy from falling growth.

"The government hasn't lost control," Byrne said. "Moderate GDP growth and a deficit of one percent of GDP or a little bit higher is consistent with the positive outlook we have on a B1 rating."

In February, Moody's raised the credit rating outlook on the Philippines to positive from stable on the basis of the government's improving finances after a surprise 2007 for the economy.

But it kept the country's debt rating at B1, or four notches below investment grade.

The Philippines recorded 7.3-percent GDP growth last year, a 31-year high, while inflation remained at a two-decade low. After years of runaway budget deficits, the shortfall shrank to 0.2 percent of GDP.

That good thing about last year was that with the smaller budget deficit, and lower interest payments, the government mobilized to spend money on public infrastructure," Byrne said. "So for the first time in something like 5 years, investment actually grew in [what GDP]." Reuters

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■ **RP exports to Taiwan** surged in Q1 /B3

■ **FDC earmarks P800M** for ethanol facility /B4

■ **DOTC starts work** on oil cleanup fund /B8

What's up, duck?

RUMOR HAS IT THAT THE LOLA AT THE Palace recently paid a very special visit to a rich cockatoo-der in Polanco.

If it's true, Palace watchers in business say the Lola must be working on something.

Supposedly, the above title was Rio Tuba, owned by the Zamora brothers, notably by Buddy Zamora.

Playing host to the Lola in her role as the state elle, according to the story, was one of the Zamora brothers—Manny.

World prices of nickel have gone up to the stratosphere in recent years, and talk in business is that the Zamoras' Rio Tuba mainly reaps tons of fish. Is one of peace is good fo...

In other words, the Zamora group is loaded. Yet we are not seeing some big investments from them.

Here, brother Nonnie, who is the congressman of Isao Aure City, was the executive secretary of the man named Bondi... Who? Bondi, a member from? He is the same man that the Lola signed back in 2001.

Anyway, if is widely known in business that the sons of the Zamora brothers, Buddy and Manny, are supporters of the Lola.

But what is interesting is that Lola's visit to the Tuba island came just days after Pres Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the president party included Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and partners.

Just what it was that brought the Lola and PGMA to one visit to a tiny fishing place in Palawan, business mags just cannot figure out yet.

Normally, however, the Lola and PGMA look train-loathing business groups over the disguised headache of ours known as high-electricity rates.

The Lola owned with the Lopez group (Meralco), while PGMA just last week followed up with an attack on all foreign investors in what country calling them "con profiteers."

Definitely something's up.

* * *

THOSE "carpetbagger" were members of the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines, which are just the biggest boosters in the business.

It's a public hooting at the Senate last week, officers of the chamber had to apologize to see battered reasons for their celebration of sending a letter to the Lola.

The joint chamber earlier wrote to the Lola, asking that she should oppose the moves in Congress to amend the Epira—the law that spells out the reforms in the electricity business.

As a matter of public image of the country, the senators of course should openly chastise those foreigners for meddling with our government.

You know, the secret? On the one hand, our lawmakers want to keep a public image of independence from the Palace, so matters how flimsy.

So if an big things can even a pass through Congress without the Palace blessings, it might suffer.

Now, the foreign investors are apologetic (the smarter ones) on the surface. They should not have gone directly to the Lola on matters involving the independent legislature. Something like that.

But from what I hear, the foreign investors have not changed their stand on the Epira amendment. Thus, the content of the letter remains their position.

* * *

SOME country appear ready think that the chamber's position was one and the same as that of the IPPs or independent power producers.

Certain senators voted to only contracts between the IPPs and Napocor, particularly the "take or pay" provision, which required Napocor to pay the IPPs even for the electricity they generate and that Napocor does not actually use.

As a background, the "take or pay" contracts were cut backagainst the wall measure during the price crisis in the 1990s. You know, those 12-hour brownouts?

Nobody would have invested in those generation units in the days of shortage, precisely because of the more assured monopoly Napocor.

Under such set-up, the IPPs did not stand a chance in competing with Napocor, which can simply refuse to buy electricity from particular IPPs and they would not do anything about it.

The Epira was the back-door of sell, a monopolistic set-up, and it thus required Napocor to sell its power plants.

Such a requirement is one of the things that any lawmakers want to take out of Epira by amendment.

And senators resenters do not want any opposition from business to such a quarrelsome measure. Word

* * *

THINGS have changed. Today, we need more power generation capacity. Another electricity shortage is forthcoming.

It seems that we have already use up our capacity—meaning, all the power that we pay for, despite the "take or pay" contracts, are actually use.

So why do we have to change the Epira to eliminate those supposedly lopsided contracts, when those liquidations have been enacted by the same lawmakers who have created all the ills in the power business—a shortage looms (or in our case, it already started), which leads to investments to the point of over-capacity, which in turn stops new investments until the day out of another shortage hangs.

While the looming shortage, are new ones closely coming till the power generated by the IPPs that we are paying for, be reduced in the problem?

In other words, the joint chamber was wondering why we needed to tamper with the Epira to get rid of the dreaded outrageous IPP contracts that are no longer dreaded management.

That stop this country only forwards—to meeting all future investors in the power business. And that's a big problem to investors—both the locals and the expat buggers.

And no foreign investor in this country could be allowed to express a legitimate worry? Gulp!

* * *

FOR, LIKE it or not, members of the joint chamber are mostly types of our high-priced elevatority cultists is only the second highest in all of Asia...and they should only be concerned with anything that our government does regarding the power sector.

Once they start to actually supply today and in the future. Why is that? Well, together they already invested billions of dollars in this country, and they can only recover those investments if they continue to operate here.

Guess what, no electricity, no business!

To top it all, other business groups (electronics exporters, for instance) actually share the fear of the joint chamber that amending the Epira today sends the wrong signal to future investors in power generation.

It's like telling them they are not welcome to this country anymore. Nobody in the right mind in business is very supportive of that.

One lawmakers are of course another story.

Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on June 24, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Manila, Manila.

The Agenda for the Meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2007 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 28, 2007
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2007
5. Approval of the 2007 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Merger of Philippine National Bank with Allied Banking Corporation
7. Approval of the Following Amendments to the Amended Articles of Incorporation:
   a) Reclassification of the Authorized Preferred Stock into Common Stock
   b) Increase in the number of Directors from eleven (11) to fifteen (15)
8. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2007 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
9. Election of Directors
10. Appointment of External Auditor
11. Other Matters
12. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2007 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as the resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 30, 2007 are available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of May 28, 2008 will be entitled to notice and vote and be voted upon during the meeting. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on June 19, 2008. Any proxies received will be validated by the Bank's Corporate Secretary on June 20, 2008, 2:30 p.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, April 30, 2008

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Corporate Secretary

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BSP closely watching banks' ...

From page B1

BSP needs to monitor these flows closely, Bautista, the clarification of our reportorial requirements in our latest issuance."

Tetangco did not comment on whether the BSP's could soon be included in the moratorium bought back.

Since the start of the year, the peso has lost 6.6 percent as the local currency closed at 44.115 against the dollar on Friday. Last year, it rose by nearly 13 percent against the greenback.

Some banks estimated the outstanding peso dollar NDFs between banks and offshore parties at about $6 billion. Others said some banks would extend the end-of-bought latest of 20 percent of unimpaired assets if these NDFs were included in the computation.

Currency forwards refer to agreements to buy or sell specified amount of goods to be settled at a specified rate to be future.

In the case of NDFs, which played a big role in the sharp currency swings during the Asian financial crisis, only the exchange rate difference rate is settled upon maturity.

At present, NDF positions are reported in a lump sum, as part of capital adequacy requirements that banks must comply with.

For PNB, no more peaks and troughs

From page B1

Having stepped down from its central banking role, PNB was able to focus on its developmental banking functions. Its status as one of the most respected banks was substantiated by the opening of offices in various parts of the world, including London, Singapore, Atlanta, Honolulu and Amsterdam—to serve the needs of Filipinos working overseas.

1980s years, however, began to fade in the 1990s when it suffered huge losses arising largely from lax lending policies. Critics said PNB, taking the lute of other government financial institutions during the martial law years, had become a milking cow for Marcos cronies.

Generous lending programs during the Marcos regime were also blamed for the financial woes suffered by PNB and other government-owned banks.

But reforms adopted during the Aquino and Ramos administrations, including moves to settle private-sector investors, helped PNB in the 1990s recover from its losses.

In 1992, PNB became the first bank in the country to post P1 billion in profit.

(To be continued)

Government urged to tighten reins

From page B1

tax-related audits, said in a report that the increase in the percentage of taxpayers audited of Pagcor should be taken into account when computing its tax liabilities.

There are four private-owned casinos licensed by Pagcor: Fortune Center, Double Casino, Hard Rock Casino and Star Entertainment Corp.

Meanwhile, Bautista said the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) is expected to collect 10 percent of the gross earnings of these businesses, the PCIRC said in its study.

NTRC said there are 1.61 thousand businesses of Pagcor all over the country. The franchisees must 25 percent of their gross revenues to Pagcor.

"Since there is only one franchise granted, which is the one given to Pagcor, it is only logical that all licensees derived from the enterprise should be liable to private entities operators through licensing to be included in the gross revenue on which the 5 percent franchise tax and the 30 percent government share shall be derived," NTRC said. *Michelle V. Ferma*

Asian stocks dive

From page B1

Shares in the tech-heavy Taiex in Taiwan declined 2.9 percent, while Korea's Kospi was down 1.3 percent.

Financial markets in countries, China, Hong Kong and the Philippines were closed for public holidays.

US light crude slipped 89 cents to $127.70 on Monday after it surged $11.70 on Friday on dollar weakness and tensions in the Middle East after an Israeli minister talked about a possible attack on Iran, the world's fourth largest producer.

Oil has risen about 40 percent since January as funds hedge against the decline and some bet that long-term oil supplies will struggle to keep up with demand as the decades ahead.

The climb in oil prices has fueled massive outcry in countries about accelerating inflation across Asia, and convinced central bankers in the region who are struggling to keep prices at low without totally enabling consumers to

China's central bank on Saturday raised the amount lenders must keep in reserve by a full percentage point, the largest rise of the year, as policymakers try to stop the flow of speculative money into the country that could exacerbate an already high inflation.

Gold, often used by investors as a hedge against inflation, dipped to around $900 an ounce in the open market after jumping $4 on Friday. *Reuters*

WELCOME RESPITE

RP exports to Taiwan surged in Q1

By Roxanne M. Dumanga

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS TO Taiwan surged by 34.82 percent to $944.9 million in the first quarter, a respite from the near-long, month-by-month slump in 2007.

Last year, shipments of goods to Taiwan slid by 17.99 percent to $2.26 billion.

According to Taipei's Government Information Office, the value of shipments from the Philippines as of March increased from about $516.31 million in the same period of 2007.

From January to March, two-way merchandise trade with Taiwan improved by about 16.97 percent to some $1.89 billion from about $1.67 billion, but also because Taiwan exported more goods to the Philippines.

Taiwanese shipments to the Philippines were valued at a total of some $1.56 billion, increasing by 18 percent from $1.33 billion.

As of end-March, Taiwan continued to maintain the upper hand with a trade surplus of about $777.66 million, growing 20.7 percent from $644.47 million.

In 2007, Taiwan's trade surplus grew by about 53 percent.

Further, the Taiwan GIO reported that the Philippines became Taiwan's 15th largest trading partner, accounting for 1.56 percent of the third-economy's total global trade, which was valued at about $124.89 billion.

The Philippines shipped to the trading with Taiwan (Only overtaking the country and Thailand (14th).

The Philippines then became Taiwan's seventh largest trade partner among developing countries—excluding mainland China—after Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and Kuwait.

China is Taiwan's largest trading partner with a 20.12-percent share or $25.39 billion of the latter's aggregate trade.

Also, the Philippines ranked 28th—down two notches from the previous quarter—among the largest sources of Taiwan's imports, accounting for 0.86 percent of total Taiwan-bound shipments worth $65.7 billion.

In terms of Taiwanese exports, the Philippines was the 16th largest destination—up by a rank—with 2.13 percent of total outbound cargoes valued at some $64 billion.

In a related development, Taipei and Manila has entered cooperation on the production of agricultural produce with lower tests levels, a move seen to help maintain Philippine access to sensitive export markets.

According to the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, the cooperation landed the government's food safety program through the ongoing training of land agriculturists and chemists on a pesticide residue safeguard system for fruits and vegetables.

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Peso seen hitting 47 to $1

DBS cites history of peso falling by up to 44% amid challenging economic environment

By Michelle V Rosca

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SINGAPORE (DBS) has projected that the Philippine peso could weaken to 47-to-a-dollar this year given the rising cost of imports arising from high prices of fuel and other commodities.

"Higher commodity prices have pressured the trade balance via costlier imports. We are mindful that it could still head higher," DBS said in an assessment of economic developments in the Philippines.

It noted that the peso has a history of weakening by as much as 44 percent of the amount it gained over the past three years amid a challenging economic climate. The bank said if this were to happen again, then the peso could slide to as low as 47.15-to-a dollar this year and eat up portion of the gains it made from 2004 to 2007.

The National Statistics Office earlier said the country's imports rose by 28 percent to $19.61 billion in the first quarter from year-ago level due largely to the rising cost of fuel.

Because exports in the first quarter hit only $12.54 billion, the country posted a trade deficit of $7.07 billion in the first three months. A trade deficit or surplus is the difference between the dollars earned by a country from exports and the dollars spent for imports.

Analysts said trade deficit could further increase given the unabated rise in fuel prices.

Increase in the cost of imported fuel and other commodities weighs on importing country to spend more dollars. Higher demand for dollars lead to the depreciation of the local currency against the greenback.

The strength of the peso has easy, reduce it hit 48 to 51 dollar, was attributed to the growth in dollar remittances sent home by overseas Filipino workers.

The National Economic and Development Authority said that the accelerated rise in the cost of imported fuel this year more than offset the impact of high OFW remittances to the peso.

The Manila has revised its economic growth forecast for this year from 6.3 to 7 percent, to only 6.0 to 6.5 percent. The reduction took into account the possibility of higher trade deficit this year given the rising cost of imports.

Economic growth is measured in terms of the gross domestic product, which is calculated by summing up investments, government spending, consumption, and net exports. Higher imports, if all other factors were held constant, therefore, pulls down growth of the economy.

DBS said the economy was likely to slowdown this year from its 7.2 percent growth in 2007. Besides costlier imports, the rising cost of domestic petroleum products depresses consumer and household spending.

Inflation hit 9.6 percent in May the highest since January 1999.

At $125/barrel average oil price, 5.7% GDP growth still possible

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT'S GOAL OF hitting at least 5.7 percent economic growth this year is hinged on global oil prices settling below recent record highs, according to current official forecasts.

The interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee recently revised its oil price assumption for this year based on the benchmark Dubai crude to $113 to $125 per barrel, from $95 to $105 per barrel, government budget documents show.

This means that even if Dubai crude stays above the psychological barrier of $100 per barrel, this year's macroeconomic framework would still be feasible for as long as the full-year average will be below $125 per barrel.

The Philippines, a net oil importer, buys mostly Dubai crude which is about $6-$8 per barrel cheaper than the higher-quality light, sweet crude that trades at $100 per barrel.

The sources said the surge in oil prices was the main factor behind the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' upward adjustments in its inflation forecasts for this year and next year.

Last week, the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board tightened monetary policy for the first time in three years, with the overnight borrowing rate raised by quarter-percentage to 5.25 percent.

The central bank revised its economic projections, targeting this year by 7-9 percent or way above its earlier forecast of 5.0-6.5 percent.

The inflation outlook for next year was also jacked up to 4-6 percent from earlier target of 3.5-4.5 percent.

Oil surged to as much as $138 per barrel on Friday as the US dollar weakened on signals the European Central Bank may raise interest rates this year.

FDC earmarks P800M for ethanol facility

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lozano

FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT Corp. (FDC) said it would spend P800 million for an ethanol plant, which it intended to put up after ending the capacity of its sugar mills and refinery.

FDC president Josephine Gotianun Yap said a study being undertaken by the Filinvest Group on the viability of the planned ethanol plant would be completed within the year.

The proposed ethanol plant may produce 100,000 liters a day or 30 million liters a year, which is seen to meet 10 to 15 percent of the country's ethanol needs.

"We're now studying the ethanol plant but we have to complete first the expansion of the sugar mills and refinery because we would use their byproducts in the ethanol plant," Yap said.

The Biofuels Act of 2006 mandates a 5 percent ethanol blend in fuel sold in the country. The mandated blend will increase to 10 percent by 2011.

To pave the way for its venture into biofuels, FDC is eyeing to sugar milling and refining capacities under its subsidiary Pacific Sugar Holdings Corp.

Pacific Sugar owns two sugar mills, Davao Sugar Mill and Cotabato Sugar Mill, which have a combined milling capacity of 9,000 metric tons (MT) per day and a refining capacity of 6,000 MT/day or 6,000 kilograms (kg) bags per day.

When completed, Pacific Sugar's milling capacity will increase by 50 percent while refining capacity will triple.

Eastern Renewables gets European partner

By Abigail L. Hu

EASTERN RENEWABLES CORP., a subsidiary of Eastern Petroleum Corp., has tied up with a European firm for the operation of its cassava cultivation business in the country.

Eastern Petroleum, company chair and chief executive, said the new partner, which he declined to name, would be investing in an ethanol refinery and depot.

Right now, he said Eastern Renewables and its partner were looking for suitable locations for their planned projects.

Eastern Renewables is eyeing a spot within the petrochemical park of PHOC Alternative Fuels Corp. in Bataan, where the company plans to set up an ethanol depot on 10-20 hectares of land.

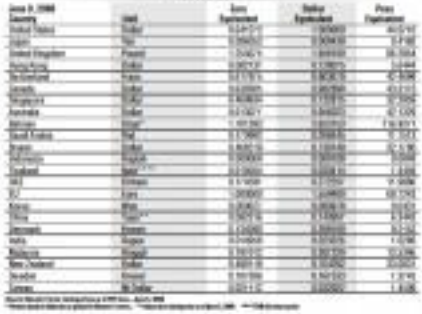
Martinez said a letter of intent to PHOC-AFC president Peter Ayalasomayajula on March 23, but he has yet to receive a response from the government firm.

"We're still open to that, but what we'll put up there will most likely be a terminal because it's too far from the source of the feedstock to have a refinery there. We're open to a joint venture or a lease agreement with PHOC-AFC," he said in an interview.

Also being considered is an area in Subic, Zambales.

Eastern Renewables expects to complete within the year the planting of 4,000 hectares of land to cassava, which will be used as feedstock for ethanol production.

Martinez earlier said his firm had already planted 3,000 hectares to cassava.



Philamlife Delights Consumers Anew with AIG WINNING EDGE; Allows Investors to Participate on Gain and not on Decline of Prime Global Equities

Breakthrough Innovation, Superior Values Account for Philamlife's Over 60 Years of Leadership

The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philamlife), the country's leading life insurer, had another record year in 2007, with gross premiums reaching P22.7 billion, a 15.9% increase compared to 2006.

The company reported that its life insurance operations generated P7.4 billion in new business, growing a strong 57.6% compared to the previous year.

Commenting on the company's 2007 performance, AIG Country Head and Philamlife President and CEO Jose I. Cuisia, Jr. said "Sales of our single premium variable life products surged, fueled by aggressive agency and marketing initiatives, and a strong market preference for investment-type products. Our financial strength and stability make us the wise choice for potential investors. In 2007, we had consolidated assets of P170.0 billion and stockholders' equity of P49.5 billion. Investment income increased 3.1% to P9.4 billion. Total revenues amounted to P36.7 billion, 14.0% higher than the previous year. Net income adjusted for foreign exchange was P4.8 billion, a 13.8% increase versus the previous year's P4.1 billion. Pre-tax income was P2.8 billion in 2007."

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PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

Republic of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

for the

Procurement of Ribbon, Toners, Cartridges for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008

1. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation, through its 2008 Corporate Operating Budget intends to apply the total sum of **ONE MILLION FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY SEVEN THOUSAND TWELVE HUNDRED PESOS (PhP 1,427,1200.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Ribbon, Toners, Cartridges for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.
2. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Procurement of Ribbon, Toners, Cartridges for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of his bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure. Bids per schedule must cover all the items indicated in the Bidding Documents.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **ONE THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (Php1,000.00)**. The method of payment will be either cash or check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 17 June 2008 at 3:00 PM at the 6th Floor, Baninter Building, 6796 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 30 June 2008, 3:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, cashier's check, irrevocable letter of credit (1% of the ABC), Bank guarantees (1 10% of ABC) or Surety Bond (2 1/2% of the ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 30 June 2008 at 10:15 AM at the 6th floor, Baninter Building, 6796 Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation
HELENA C. TOLENTINO
5th Floor, Baninter Building, 6796, Ayala Avenue, Makati City
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e-mail: hctolentino@psalm.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **HELENA C. TOLENTINO**
BAC Chairperson

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF
TRANSFORMERS & WELDING CONNECTOR

1. The National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (NTC-HO), through the 2008 Corporate Operating Budget intends to apply the sum of **PHP 4,000,000.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of Transformers & Welding Connector. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening. Details shall be as per list.
2. The National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (NTC-HO), now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Transformers & Welding Connector. Delivery of the goods is required within sixty (60) calendar days upon receipt of the Approved Purchase Order. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure. Bids per schedule must cover all the items indicated in the Bidding Documents, ITB.
4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure. Bids per schedule must cover all the items indicated in the Bidding Documents, ITB.
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from TransCo and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS ONLY (Php2,500.00)**. The method of payment will be either cash or check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
7. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 17 June 2008 at 1:30 PM at the 6th Floor, Baninter Building, 6796 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.
8. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 30 June 2008, 12:30 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, cashier's check, irrevocable letter of credit (1% of the ABC), Bank guarantees (1 10% of ABC) or Surety Bond (2 1/2% of the ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
9. Bid opening shall be on 30 June 2008 at 1:45 PM at the 6th floor, Baninter Building, 6796, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
10. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation reserves the rights to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation
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(Sgd.) **HELENA C. TOLENTINO**
BAC Chairperson

IMF team visiting RP

By Michelle V. Beros

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) representatives are coming to the Philippines for a five-day visit (June 16 to 20) to assess the extent of the impact of rising fuel prices and food supply woes on the local economy.

A program detailing the IMF visit showed that its representatives would be meeting with officials from various economic agencies—including the Department of Finance, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Department of Budget and Management—and will analyze how several investment banks.

The visit is part of the IMF's mission to member countries. The assessment by the IMF is often translated into recommendations as to how a member country could improve its economic performance and ensure enough liquidity in its dollar reserves and balance of payments (BOP) position.

The IMF do not provide loans the developed projects and programs. It lends money to member countries that are suffering from liquidity problems.

Coming from a relatively economic performance last year, the Philippines has been challenged this year by the rising cost of fuel in the world market and the tightening of the supply.

Analysts said these problems could weigh down on the Philippines' BOP position, given that the country was a heavy importer of rice and fuel.

Imported oil accounts for 20-40 percent of the country's total energy requirements. The Philippines is also said to be the world's largest importer of rice.

Given this, the peso has depreciated, so-called breaking into the 44-to-a-dollar territory.

The increase in the cost of fuel and rice imports means the country needs to shell out more dollars from its reserves to pay for these products.

In a report on its outlook for the Philippines for 2008, the IMF said the economy could grow by as much as 6.3 percent. But now if the proposed fiscal reforms were implemented.

Among the fiscal reforms supported by the IMF are the rationalization of fiscal incentives granted to businesses, changes in the excise tax system, and improvement in the tax collection system.

Bills amending the tax tax law of 1997 and on the rationalization of the executive system are both pending in Congress.

PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

Republic of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

for the

Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Anti-Virus Software for PSALM Corporation

1. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation, through its 2008 Corporate Operating Budget intends to apply the total sum of SIX HUNDRED SEVENTY THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (PhP670,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Anti-Virus Software for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Anti-Virus Software for PSALM Corporation. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

   Delivery of the GOODS is required per schedule as indicated in the **Bid Data Sheet** of the Bidding Documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure. Bids per schedule must cover all the items indicated in the Bidding Documents.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ONE THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (Php1,000.00). The method of payment will be either cash or check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 17 June 2008 at 10:00 AM at the 6th Floor, Baninter Building, 6796 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 30 June 2008, 10:00 AM. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, cashier's check, irrevocable letter of credit (1% of the ABC), Bank guarantees (1 10% of ABC) or Surety Bond (2 1/2% of the ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 30 June 2008 at 10:15 AM at the 6th floor, Baninter Building, 6796 Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(Sgd.) **HELENA C. TOLENTINO**
BAC Chairperson

PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

Republic of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

for the

Procurement of Office Supplies and Materials for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008

1. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation, through its 2008 Corporate Operating Budget intends to apply the total sum of **TWO MILLION SIX HUNDRED NINETEEN THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED FIFTY SIX (PhP2,619,956.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Office Supplies and Materials for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Procurement of Office Supplies and Materials for PSALM Corporation for CY 2008. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
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4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS ONLY (Php2,500.00)**. The method of payment will be either cash or check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
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(Sgd.) **HELENA C. TOLENTINO**
BAC Chairperson

DOTC starts work on oil cleanup fund

From page B1

fuel prices in the country. She said that broker firms can pass on the cost of contributing to the fund to their customers. The oil companies. These firms might then pass on the cost to end-users.

The Oil Pollution Compensation Act was patterned after the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPF), which is also built up using cash funds.

Under the IOPF model, if a tanker spills oil, it must send a notification fund for oil pollution damage. If the amount does not cover all the admissible claims, further compensation is available from the emergency cleanup fund.

Besides funding oil spill cleanup operations, the fund can be used for research, enforcement and monitoring activities of relevant agencies such as the Manila Bay Coordinating Office, the Philippine Ports Authority, the Environmental Management Bureau and the Department of Energy.

Pre-register products, exporters to EU directed

By Roland N. Dantago

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EC) has announced that exporters shipping raw chemicals to the European Union should pre-register their products not later than Dec. 1 or else they would lose market access to the 27-country bloc.

The EC said in a statement that mandatory registration of shipments of chemical substances going to EU member countries began last June 1 in accordance with the provisions of a new law called registration, evaluation, and restriction of chemicals or Reach.

The agency explained that Reach also covered chemical substances manufactured in the EU, including those contained in other products.

Also, the EC said distillers for registration were extended by eight years to 2018, but this only applies to chemical substances that are pre-registered.

Pre-registration applies to existing or "phase-in" substances and products that contain "phase-in" substances that are intended to be released or exported to the EU in quantities of at least one ton a year.

The EC said that pre-registration was free of charge and consists of the submission of basic information such as details of the company and the nature of the chemical concerned.

On the other hand, new or non-phase in chemicals have to be fully registered immediately.

The Reach law also covers requirements related to classification, labeling, authorizations and restrictions.

According to the EC, exporters from EU countries may appoint a company established in the EU or act as their "only representative," who will be responsible for fulfilling Reach obligations, relieving the importer of the duty to do so.

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Lead Faculty:

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DOTC starts work on oil cleanup fund

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and Communication said it had started consultations with stakeholders on the proposed P1.5-billion oil spill cleanup fund that would come from mandatory contributions of oil tanker companies.

"The fund cannot be tapped. The workgroup for the IRR (implementing rules and regulations) of the Oil Pollution Compensation Act is scheduled in August. The government side will go first and then the private sector, and both sides will discuss many issues, including the fund's impact on industries," said DOTC Undersecretary Elena Bautista.

The Oil Pollution Compensation Act of 2007 was revived in reaction to the M/T Solar 1 oil spill off Guimaras in 2006 and it provides for the collection of a levy of 10 centavos per liter from tanker companies.

"Since we have already required black oil tankers to be double-hulled, that is already a preventive measure against oil spills. And since the price of oil has been increasing steadily, there is no rush to implement the 10-centavo-per-liter levy," she said.

But while she see it being prepared for implementation, another revenue for securing the oil spill cleanup fund may be considered, according to sources.

"There is a proposal by Rep. Mikaela Angara imposing high penalties for oil spills. If the bill includes provisions repealing RA 9483, then instead of the 10-centavo levy, the penalties would create the fund," the official said.

Shipping companies earlier expressed concern that the levy could further increase

(DOTC, B)

DA urges banks to increase credit to farmers, fisherfolk

By Amy R. Nunez

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA) urged banks to make it easier for farmers and other small businesses to get funds they need to boost food production.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said that widening the scope of small rural borrowers to credit would go a long way in increasing the productivity of the agriculture sector, which accounts for almost a fifth of the country's gross domestic product.

However, farmers and fisherfolk get "only a measly 5 percent of the total loans released by commercial banks."

"We need to focus on microfinance and simplify the requirements imposed by banks to enable our farmers to better access loans and use them funds to further boost their productivity," Yap said in a statement.

This becomes more important now, the DA said, because a big chunk of the national government's P417.7-billion fiscal package covers rural credit.

Fields slated for fertilizer, irrigation and infrastructure, education and extension work, loans, dryers and other postharvest facilities and credit.

Of the package, P35 billion has been earmarked for loans and credit for farmers, fisherfolk and other small rural borrowers. Since down then to 2007, the total credit requirement of the agriculture sector for palay, corn, coconut, sugarcane and fisheries was estimated at P280 billion, but banks were only able to finance P48 billion or 24 percent of this requirement.

According to the DA, the Agri-Agra Law is "overdated because 77 percent of the total loan portfolio of banks are being channeled to non-agriculture sectors...15 percent for agriculture and 23 percent to agriculture-related beneficiaries."

But because of the availability of alternative forms of compliance, the compliance rate as of June 2007 for agriculture was only 10.88 percent and for agrarian reform beneficiaries, only 2.62 percent.

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LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sevese San Juan

Poypoy, my frisbee 'aspin'

He was competing with the Belgian Malinois, Labradors, German Shepherds. This is our loser's story

THE AUTHOR with Poypoy

By Nice Rodriguez
Lifestyle

THIS IS A LOSER'S STORY. MY DOG, AN Aspin (aptly Pinoy), lost in the recent Finals of the Alpo Petlife Challenge to Baguio City. He was the lone cowboy dog competing with the Belgian Malinois, Labradors and German Shepherds.

Earlier, he won third place in the Manila eliminations rounds.

Despite our losing, people still ask me how I trained any pet to play the game. If I told them, I cut him in a corner and told him to catch his frisbee and that was it, they wouldn't believe me.

Poypoy came into my life unexpectedly. When I woke up to buy my breakfast one morning more than two years ago, he was there barely lifting his head, dying near my gate. When I asked whose puppy it was, the neighbors' helpers said, the dog had been there for two days.

I brought the puppy home and gave him a drink. For I myself had not eaten yet. Then, I noticed his dilated dog around and asked for his owners. We didn't get her, for just about hour, hunters away was a bathroom window who said she didn't want him anymore. He consented to and moved up her canopy.

Vague future

Well, I didn't want him to, I was supposed to be just a transient from Canada, on an extended holiday in Manila but I didn't like moving arguments and just asked for his name—Poypoy.

Not desiring to be involved, I retained his name. Hearing just was my common fob, my own future was vague and I was in no mood to worry about another species' fate.

I slipped him into my bedroom and saved for him from a distance, allowing him inside my cluttered home occasionally.

Then one early morning, when I let him pee, I found him all drenched with a big rat on his sprightly leg. There was also a lot of blood in the laundry area. He wanted to be with me and tried to open a sharp the edged back door and sliced himself good.

I panicked for I had never seen that much blood in my whole life. It needed a plastic bag around his wound to catch the blood such incident him to a pedicab. I kept crying, "Mi dog's hurt!"

We rode to two animal clinics but they were still closed. From the vacant doors, I was also swarmed up with blood.

Toddler

In desperation, we pedaled to Gerliana where we found Dr. Shanthe Bola and her veterinarian husband, who agreed to stitch him up even if their clinic was still closed. I paid P2,000 for his surgery and medicines, plus the vet gave me schedules about the kids she found lodged between his claws. I was embarrassed and wanted to tell them he was not my dog but I had already paid for their services and maybe, Poypoy was, by that time, already my dog.

When I lived in Toronto, I remember watching news on Canadian TV about a research showing that dogs had the IQ of a two-year-old toddler. So I adored Poypoy as a kid.

After he was breastfeeding, one of the first words he learned was "here" (Lower) because that was what I pleased in order with him after I sorted out my own life. Of course, he knew what "come" (come along) was. Before "sit" (sit), we were did various obedience training.

Like to pre-school, I taught him the names of places like "kusina," "kotse" (car entry) and Tomas (our market), and people like Grandma, Tita and Nining. Things like "bola," "tulog" and Vitamin D (sun and motor cycles).

"Where's your bitch?" I would ask him. He would raise one of his hind legs and showed what remained of his private parts. By then, I had also paid for his neutering (another P2,500) because I planned to leave him in a shelter when they asked that abandoned pets be fixed first. After he, "where's your bitch" trick, it was impossible to keep Poypoy to myself anymore. He was already meeting people. He could do fifties, and do "complex" commands like Give Grandma and Get Him.

Obedience commands

It was also around this time that my neighbor ripped another unneutered dog inside my gate. His name was Red Ebora Eskimo, the irony. I found him for Dr. Bolcon Kiel was a bit of a mental case. Poypoy would also con-

cede a Get Kiel's Plate for his companion. The obedience commands just happened—Up, Dapa, Higa, Bawa, Takol, Kuha, Akyat, Talon, Takbo, Dwa, Tres(s), Taling, and Una (when I wanted him to go before me on a leash).

Most of my commands were in Filipino. He would even do a fire-jump ritual like whoop on his hind legs and knockout Peter (Play Dead) and then recover after ten counts like in the boxing ring. He's also learned how to count (shooting of course). The longer we stuck together, the bigger his vocabulary grew, broken jaw being our addiction.

Early on, I already bought him a frisbee. The label said it was safe for dogs. It looked more like a giant top with an elevation in the middle so the dog could pick it up easily. Love

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WE ARE the champions! Women dragons of Germany

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ZEST mates

Fila stages the hottest dragonboat race on Boracay

POPULAR ADVENTURE RESORT Fila had Boracay on the roll with over a thousand participants from the Philippines and around the world competing in the hottest water sports tournament of the year, the 2008 Fila Boracay International Dragon Boat Festival Challenge.

No less than the brand winner sunglasses, young president of Fila, Gris Albert, led the event with 97 teams from as far as Australia, Germany, USA, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Navy finished 2 nd in the men's, women's and mixed 2000- and 500-meter races.

Already on its second super successful year, the dragon boat festival was the biggest in date and the biggest sporting event held on the island resort.

The opening ceremony and welcome cocktails officially started the party rolling with a live band plus other heartbreaking entertainment extravaganza.

The participants in the 500-meter sweet, women's and mixed open races battled up the island while spectators were enthralled by the head-to-head action. The hard-driving Caroline team almost swept the championships, topping the men's and mixed events. Hong Kong's Stanley Dragon won the women's race.

The action never stopped, palangan. The next day it was the 500-meter men's open, women's open and mixed races. Topping the women's championship was Boracay's very own Dragon Boracay team while the Manoc Dragons of Germany scored their way to the top of the men's race.

The Fila International Dragon Boat Festival was packed with highlights. Fila, the major sponsors and official outfitter, superbly organized this awesome event together with the Boracay Island Buddhist Association and in cooperation with the Department of Tourism, Philippine Dragon Boat Federation and the Municipality of Malay.

DELPHINA Organista, Kenji Ayres of eTelecare and Ira Herras

OTHERS enjoying include Selina Gerstner, Joey Reyes and Princess Lim

French Savoir Faire

The Baron Philippe de Rothschild experience elegant dinner and wine degustation at the up-scale Bellevue restaurant of the popular Diamond Hotel on Roxas Boulevard was one dinner the diverse starters will never forget. Adding, it was totally French par excellence! The hotel's robust team present were again Ramakhan Ignacchi together with its local president, brilliant woman of substance Cecille Ang and the talented executive chef Jean-Pierre Migne made sure everything was imported as was be.

The beautiful guests dressed in their elegant best, dressed in and decorated while engrossed with the overflowing superb cocktail finger food paired with the excellent Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir from the Languedoc South of France. An

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen along YBL Photo Solutions

BEST OF PALS. Ana Bitanga with Donna de la Cruz, Filipino resident Cris Albert and Irina Reyes

BMW'S Candy Lucbana with SEAIR's Patrick Tan, Fila's chief Santos and Ryan Gigi Pir

BORACAY Regency Hotel president Henry Chuanyan with DOT Asst. Sec. Cynthia Carreon, ABS president Alexander Zuellig and Philippine Dragon Boat Federation director Nonoy Sagun

CAMARINES Sur (Caroline) Dragonboat Team, winners of the 500-meter race, with Gov. Lani Villafuerte

MIXED team of Runners Club of the Philippines

SNP Milk Bonus Heart Breakers of Hong Kong

ROBERT Palomar, Maria Mari Lucot Murray Jones

BY LAWS Lukmanov, Marian Yeo, Ricky Lim and Ryan Tan

DIAMOND Head's well-respected GM Konstantin Ignatchik with talented executive chef Jean-Pierre Migne

MEGA business man Murray Hurst, with his grand wine master of the elegant dinner, Tita Trillo of the popular Tinsula Wine Cellar, with Annabel Yang and Tony Chong

GANG OF 3. Mario Katigbak, Bvlgari's brother main wine and country manager Tony Meighan, MCC brilliant president and Aaron Costa, Manor Card VP for operations

Poypoy, my frisbee 'aspin'

From page C1

for tattooing, Poypoy never paid an instinct to it, and after finding out it flew like a brick, we forgot about it.

Visibility

Then a friend from the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (Pawe) told that they would like to take Poypoy to Baguio for a "parade," and that there would be a frisbee competition.

They assured visibility for native dogs like Poypoy, particularly in that summer capital replete (there was an) antipasti side of dog meat. They promised that aspins were more often absent in dog shows and that they wanted him to perform his tricks at Professor Poypoy in their pet therapy program. Poster Dog which they will add to a theme hospital.

Personally visibility had already been a big issue for me. Being gay, I was part of the Asian lesbians (have named lesbians of colors) and the other gays who clamored for equal rights in Toronto from the late '90s, successfully lobbied for somethin same sex marriage in Canada, including privileges like spousal benefits and immigration sponsorships.

It was also for visibility that I penned one of the first Filipino lesbian books, "Throw It to the Force" published by Iconate in 1999 to share the hidden and heartening lives of Filipino lesbians.

There there were the other Filipina invisibles: I — undocumented aliens, die, nudes and sex trade workers who blended in with the rest. I am not cured a lesson on the issue for I know the pains and consequences of being unwanted, which is those dogs' cares were not only about outright abuse like being chained and caged all their lives, but a lot more banal like the illegal dog meat trade.

Respect and awe

Although aspins had always been present in our streets and homes, it was no pretentious and snobbish not to see them in dog shows; when they were just as much a part of our household. Like myself, they also demanded equal respect and awe.

PAW's message in February was super fun around that time. I started looking for a frisbee for Poypoy. A marksman skeet dog, he has a mouth that's not as big as that of a Labrador's, for instance.

I really didn't know what to get for him. The good frisbees were pricey and he already wanted the first one I bought. I knew he'd catch but it had to be something that was not easy and of the right size.

Since many aspins had lived as strays in a dog-eat-dog world, they had already survived as catchers. It was just a matter of replacing the food with the frisbee.

Learn frisbee

Also, I learned from the web, that to get a dog obsessed with frisbees, it's best to get a minimum of five just to be able to regularly throw discs in succession. That would be costly. Nevertheless, the first three times I got were soft plastic rings that looked more like baby toys. They were the size of small plates and Poypoy liked them immediately.

If you want your dog to learn to catch frisbees, you needn't go the same route and buy them. Dog behaviorist Anja Imawan in training his three-month-old pup with paper plates.

Mga finalist and former stars per Avatar Akella, who formed his dog (Head Start Cambodge) to the Alps Adventure Challenge, made himself, made rubber frisbee rings from floor mats. And when he had to buy around 50 discs to train Zhed, he used dust caps to reinforce the cheap discs he got.

I opted to make my own aspin frisbee to add to the cool one Mga gave us for free in their Luzon-wide clinics. I cut circles from empty rice sacks and reinforced them with shoe caps.

The top price winner Any Baron Ilan Bolito ordered his Bigas Bite disc for his dog Bogie from the internet for $14.95 (P690).

Nevertheless, whatever round thing you throw at your dog, make sure it will not hurt him. The internet warns about cheap plastic ones which may crack inside your dog's mouth.

Interim, who dedicated the Alps frisbee clinic at Ondoni in Quezon City, said that a dog must first get used to the frisbee. It could be introduced as a dish first or several before to face.

At the clinic, they gave us peanut butter to smear on the discs. They also gave us treats and the dogs can be rewarded for the dogs who get interested in the toys. The dogs must associate the frisbees with something good.

We were also taught the right way to throw frisbees at the dogs, for right-handed throwers, the right leg must be set forward and the disc must be released when the index finger is pointed at the dog.

It was at this clinic that I first saw that Poypoy could be a good candidate for the Alps Frisbee Challenge. He attacked the discs like a magnet to iron. He caught them hand as if he was showing off.

Edit mine

Just for fun

Are dogs with advanced obedience training, frisbee is not a difficult trick to teach. I learned that most of the Alaska King contenders in the Clark Alps event just learned about the competition on the day itself and joined the event without practice—"just for fun."

At the Mall of Asia where the first round of eliminations was held, Poypoy caught 33 frisbees in 2 minutes, the fastest dated. That was a breeze. Most of the Labradors and Lhasa Apsos the real aspin finishers Alps practiced, opening the chance for Poypoy who can catch any type of frisbee whether plastic, cloth or rubber.

The top two winners were a yellow Labrador and a Belgian Malinois, owned by Nick Rios and Lito Ramirez, respectively. But was already a two-time winner from Baro, my friend previous Alps contests. Simmonds was a senior security consultant who also trains drug and bomb sniffing dogs and K9 police.

Individualism

It was a different race at the Baguio finals. The Mondeo Ring guys were there. They showed their stuns. Hounds with solid authority. Pure dogs in the hunt for the ground frisbee when they barked. There were the guys who ordered their Belgians to fetch and had helpers carrying their coats and dogs. There were the daredevils who were protective shavings when they crashed with them.

It was a sure show of intimidation both for their dogs and us, the other contenders. These dogs were trained, sure but they were animals not like my Poypoy.

I was extremely nervous. Poypoy was, then, the only aspin of forty-seven a few weeks before the few. My house pet was fed up with frisbeeing until I found a way around it.

Whenever we practiced, I didn't just bring his discs but his other toys as well, including a bag which he enjoys jumping in and a few sticks and balls. We were the only contestants among 30. The waiting felt like forever.

Because of the stress, I forgot to pep up Poypoy before our turn. I crossed him from his sleep into the arena and as usual, he entered the ring and checked the environment. He ignored me and did that for about a minute. It was the most embarrassing time of my life. I was there mentoring, helpless with an independent-minded dog and more than a thousand people watching me every move. We were finally ready but my beloved aspin was ignoring me!

The audience was requested to be quiet to understand Poypoy. The crowd helped because everybody wanted to see how a Filipino dog would fare with the canine contenders. But Poypoy seemed rather bothered the mumbai inside the ring rather than each discs.

Not a chaser

Then finally his tail began to wag sideways. I knew that he was ready. We lost a precious minute there and then suddenly he started catching. He had always been a short-distance catcher and slowly we began to score. All in all, he garnered 14 points, but he showed jumping-frisbee that were not present at the IRCA contest. He improved slightly and we landed eighth in the finals, with him still outscoring Cocapalooza Belgians.

Poypoy could catch and retrieve, but he was not a chaser. He would come his catch to bite the discs but not run too far inside. He retained in rather tight places like our most intimate areas, where we momentarily got distracted by athletes (seducing the frisbee, mannerisms and hairdos). Some catchy mantra made anything with wheels scary for him.

There is also the problem of snowbirds, who had never owned frisbees in their lives and getting too curious about Poypoy's flying discs. The low-cuts I concluded Poypoy at the premier CCP grounds, he looked like a graceful galloping horse, until the security guard ran after us.

A few days before the competitions, I found an isolated spot at the CCP only to find out it was quietly inhabited by hungry mosquitoes. Definitely not the best place to let my slightly obese dog loose. One single rebuke at my dog's intelligent head could end everything in an instant and turn me into a one-man.

Unfriendly

Incidentally, it is a shame for such a spacious place like the CCP to be so unfriendly with dogs. The Harbor Square doesn't even let pets around even if we used the drive-thru window outside the main hall. Small they had cleaned out the place of the more pet-friendly cars-save escalators. Dog lovers and their companions need to run in sight-seen.

Yes, we lost, but it's not Poypoy's fault. Given a lesser nature, Poypoy would count further. I am too aware of his many dog-deficiencies and training rules we break each day. For instance, my dog and I sleep together, a no-no in many training manuals. I allow Poypoy to release invasive mucus, he's got something funny to say like the other dogs but he could never for not practicing Dubos.

I let him lay for food with his charming eyes and surely he would flunk all food refusal dog tests.

Rather than stress myself, I made sure a loud, fuss-encouraging voice on him. Then, I allow him to play all over me, specially "nestle" him in bed or watching TV so the crotch, giving him the impression that he's the alpha dog.

I let other people touch and praise him, thus confusing my authority figure. He doesn't just want to be favored, he demands massages even from strangers. And yes, I bite and spoil him in the wrong times.

Timing

Training is all about timing that's why a chicken and lens number work successfully in training many animals like dolphins, whales, cats and more. But I am too stubborn to "unding" my dog. As far as I know, it's not about winning but about having fun.

By the way, I was never able to give my Poypoy. Whenever it's time to let him go, I hear a painful groan from my inner soul, or maybe more accurately my inner dog howling and crying or experiencing "blue" Lou Umayam of Bow versus I say, already a share to my dog. I told her that, but sorry, Poypoy is my "one" woman for both of us—with him as my master.

I wish a lot more Filipinos would take up the challenge of training their aspins to improve their bonds and show them off. I used to be reprimanded by the local dog catchers members. But Poypoy several rather bothered the mumbai inside the ring rather than each discs.

Dogpoy's agility skills like jumping on hoops and hurdles, wearing thought pulse and going through Animal Kingdom caught in each events. And then yes, the frisbee clinics how to bring able to communicate with the person next to you, I can't think of anything more satisfying for a human than being able to understand and talk with another creature. The exceptions may bite, the roaches may crawl, the bees may sting, the birds may shit, and the rats may swindle, but when you can get a dog coo-coo to back and bite, it truly is indeed a wonderful world.

Yes, even for us losers.

(Far left) Top winners in the Alps Frisbee Challenge recently held in Baguio City. (left) Barbara Mickey-Jones.

You may consider giving your children a regular vitamin-mineral supplement

Is there a 'smart pill' for children?

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

THERE ARE NOW WAYS of enhancing one's energy and even for life. There are answers to some of your questions.

Is there a "smart pill" I can give my children in preparation for school?

While there isn't any magic pill available to make your children smarter, there is a recommended lifestyle. The brain will suffer due to malnutrition. This is a fact. And this is why as early as the pregnancy stage, mothers are advised to supplement with omega 3-type fish oil fat with DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid). Sources: mackerel, herring, sardines, anchovy, tuna, white fish, salmon.

Adding Sumerex (our children) can convert DHA (linolenic acid) into DHA. Sources: leafy green vegetables, flaxseed oil, walnuts, brazil nuts, seaweed algae.

According to Richard Levine, chief of nutrition, NY hospital—Cornell Medical Center, it may be wise to make students take 10 IU fish oil per kilo, or approximately 2000 mg daily is a suggested daily maintenance dosage. (Reference: Your Ultimate Brain—Joan Carper)

Apart from this powerful supplement, you may consider giving your children a regular vitamin-mineral supplement. More important, never send a child to school on an empty stomach. Studies have shown that breakfast eaters generally perform better in school (and even in the workplace).

Help! My daughter, 16, and I, 48 have acne problems. What is a quick remedy?

It has everything to do with hormones and hormonal imbalance. Acne can be very annoying as a teenage blemish. Your daughter has raging hormones, while yours is unpredictable at the perimenopausal age.

Best to consult a dermatologist. However, allow me to conceive a look into your diet. Our own anniversary junk food. Avoid sweets (especially chocolate). It is important to maintain a regular blood sugar level and one that peaks and drops. High sugar equals poor skin/complexion.

Take vitamin A or beta-carotene supplements. Increase vitamin C. Drink 10-12 glasses of water daily.

Have a glass of fresh carrot/tomato. Refrain/remember juice daily (for five days) clears up the skin.

Keep your face clean. Avoid touching it with unwashed hands. Have a cleansing at a dermatologist's clinic.

For hormonic maintenance (not for your daughter) take Chinese herb, dong quai or Siberian/Korean ginseng, or black cohosh as herbal remedy (available at any health food store).

Why is everything going wrong for me? I can't seem to get started on my thing.

Life strategist, Dr. Philip Maxjmw (of "Oprah" fame) explains if you continue to give yourself excuses, you will never get anything done.

Maybe...but maybe, sooo-ee, shut selling yourself. You are building on to belief system that may be limiting or rigid. Impressions like "I may not deserve a second chance," I failed before, I could fail again," "I'm not just good enough or smart enough" or "If I'm too happy, something could go wrong."

Self-examination is imperative. Take whatever time you need to examine/explore your inner beliefs. Writing them down or honestly as you can will help you face your fears. It is important that you do some honest cleaning now.

Get rid of your cobwebs because if you don't, the inner you will only house the ghosts of your historical and not yet revealed for limitlessness. Do it today so tomorrow can be liberated.

As Dr. Phil says, "Stop making excuses."

Love and light

(Reference: "Life Strategies")

E-mail the author at cmquirino@hotmail.com

Of what practical use is ESP?

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Licauco

I WAS RECENTLY TAKEN by surprise when a business manager friend I was inviting to attend my seminar suddenly asked me: "Of what practical use is ESP? What for should I try developing it?"

"You mean you do not know?" I asked him incredulously.

"Nope," he snapped back, "Never bothered to find out."

After I had gained some composure and began to doubt subtly I realized he was right, not many people, even supposedly highly educated and intelligent ones, are aware of the many uses of ESP in everyday life, in business and practically any human endeavor or activity.

Let's begin with some scientific background info, which many of us do not know about.

Back in the '50s, two researchers from the Engineering Department of the University of Newark, New Jersey in the United States started to ask a somewhat similar question. They were John Mihalasky and Dwight Jones. They wanted to know whether there was any correlation between business success and ESP ability.

So they devised an experiment to find out. They asked 50 chief executives of various companies to guess what two-digit numbers would come out of a randomly generated set of numbers. Then they asked them to fill out a questionnaire about the financial status of their firms during the last five years.

They discovered those executives who scored very high in extrasensory perception (what two-digit numbers would come out were amazingly accurate) had increased their profitability in five years. And those who scored average or below in their ability to guess the numbers correctly were managing companies that had either average profitability or were even going down.

When they presented their findings to the university, they were told the results were interesting but not conclusive because their sample of 50 executives was too few.

So, taking given the opportunity to test their theory on some 1,500 top executives who held a convention in the university, they repeated the same test and found the same correlation with them. The results were the same. Those who scored high in the ESP test were running highly successful firms while those who scored low on the test were running firms with average or even declining profitability.

This was the first scientifically controlled experiment that shows without doubt the relevance of ESP ability to business success. And I tend to believe this because I have been for almost 20 years already a regular speaker of an elite and prestigious international organization of top-level executives called the Young Presidents Organization based at that time in Dallas, Texas.

During my talks, I occasionally give those executives an exercise in remote viewing, and in all occasions, I never get an average success rate below 90 percent among those who attended my seminars. Remote viewing is a scientifically validated skill that began at the Stanford Research Institute (later called SRI International) in Menlo Park California in the '70s.

I conducted a modified version here of the scientific protocol developed by physicists Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff.

Other uses

There are many other uses of ESP aside from business. It has been successfully used in crime detection and investigation, finding missing persons, lost objects and even hidden treasures or modern drops.

During the last World War, the military suppliers used psychics to detect or find leaks in underwater pipelines, which could not be detected by any scientific instruments. They used dowsers or water diviners to locate them and they succeeded in doing so.

Psychics with above-average psychic ability can sense danger or problem before it arises and avoid it. They can find solutions to problem faster than the average person.

A student friend lost out, whom can tell into a coma, by remote viewing. She saw him hanging precariously at the branch of a tree at the edge of the ravine, which ran very inland.

In the '80s, I talked to the head of the Psychokinesis Research Society in Utrecht, The Netherlands, who showed me a letter signed by the Chief of Police of Utrecht certifying that 12 serious crimes that year were solved through the help of psychics.

Is there a practical value to developing ones' psychic ability? Why don't you ask the people I have mentioned above? They will tell you.

I have been teaching ESP development for the last 20 years worldwide. It wouldn't have survived this long if it had no practical value at all.

Note: The next Soulmates, Karma & Reincarnation seminar will be held June 14, 1-7 p.m. and your Mind Development seminar, June 21-22, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Rm. 309, Prime Plaza 1 Condominium, 196 Legaspi St., Urdaneta, Makati. Call 8307243 or 09156086; fax 8176850.

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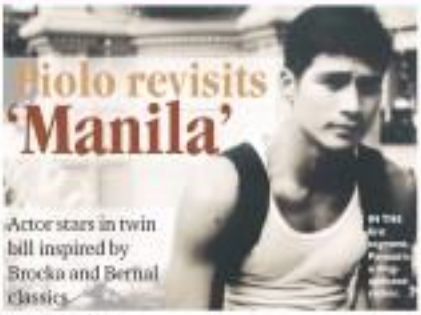

Piolo revisits 'Manila'

Actor stars in twin bill inspired by Brocka and Bernal classics

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

PRODUCER ARLEEN CUEVAS says that actor Piolo Pascual has only one option to do an indie film outside of his contract with Star Cinema: ABS-CBN's movie arm.

"The fact that he chose our project says a lot about the script. We liked it so much that he also signed up as co-producer," says Cuevas.

Pascual's next pet project is "Manila," a new MO directed by Adolfo Alix Jr. and Raya Martin and "inspired" by Lino Brocka's "Bagong" and Ishmael Bernal's "Manila By Night."

Alix recalls that the production team gave Pascual DVD copies of the Brocka and Bernal classics as research material.

"At nagkuwento nga siya sa shower, 'Parang ang gaan-gaan ng mga pelikula noon, ang lalim ng mga kuwento,'" says Alix.

The film is divided between "Day and Night," Alix explains. At least, "Manila By Night" is the Day episode, while "Bagong" is Night.

In the Day segment, Pascual plays William, a drug addicted rocker. In the Night segment, he portrays Philip, bodyguard of a politician's son.

Pascual's characters are named after the lead stars of the two classics. William Martinez ("Manila By Night") and Philip Salvador ("Bagong").

Pascual's character in the Day segment is a rocker who is addicted to drugs. In the Night segment, he plays a bodyguard of a politician's son.

Pascual's character in the Day segment is named after the lead star of the classic. William Martinez ("Manila By Night") and Philip Salvador ("Bagong").

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ENTERTAINMENT HIGHLIGHTS DURING the week of June 8-14:

1961: The movie "Cleopatra" made its premiere in New York City. It starred Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

1979: Actor John Wayne died of cancer at the age of 72.

1987: Comedian Richard Pryor nearly killed himself while free-basing cocaine at his home in San Fernando Valley, California. The resultant inferno exploded in his face.

1991: Bruce Springsteen married Longtime girlfriend Patti Scialfa in a private ceremony at their Beverly Hills, California, mansion.

1999: Actress Gwyneth Paltrow married actor David Arquette in San Francisco. —AP

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Piolo revisits 'Manila'

Pretty girl

rodor (Jaypee").

Alfi and Martin also made sure to cast actors who were part of the original films (Mitch Valdez of "Manila By Night" and Andrs Limbo of "Jaguar").

"Books portrayed Phillipe's mother in the original," Alfi says. "But now, she's playing Hotel's grandmother."

In the first episode, Rosemarie Rocco is taking over the same role originated by Daniela Sa-lin.

Manila says they chose Howard because "he is one of the best actors of his generation."

"Piolo is changing his look in the two films," Alfi says. "In Jaguar, he's sporting a tan. In Manila By Night, he's wearing an earring."

Alfi relates that Howard plans to shoot "Manila" during the days off from the ABS-CBN fantasy series "Lobo" which is WRAPPING up soon.

When "Manila" had its first shooting day in the dance of Bianca recently, Howard was noticeably nobbed by him, Alfi recounts. "Piolo didn't mind. He had a rowdy male for everyone."

Howard also directed one whole day for the film's portion at on the streets of Binondo.

Alfi and Martin are shooting the movie in black and white, on 16mm to be blown up to 35mm film.

"Manila" is Piolo's third indie film in just as many years—after Cesar Hernandez's "Kagat ng Bilbil" in 2006 and Cathy Garcia's "Chenoweth" in 2007.

(E-mail: bayanihanmilagro@hotmail.com)

FOR THE "Jaguar" segment, Piolo is dressing in the duties of Ramon. The original Brocka film's climax was set in Bombay Mountain, says director Alfi, who is recreating the climax scene in a Malabon cheapsite.

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2 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
3 MADE OF HONOR
4 CARE GIVER

STA. ROSA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 MEGA SNAKE 5 CARE GIVER

LIPA

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 CARE GIVER
3 THE POSSESSED
4 INDIANA JONES 5 KUNG FU PANDA

DASMARINAS

1 MEGA SNAKE
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

IMUS

1 CARE GIVER
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
4 INDIANA JONES

ANGELES

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 PERFECT CREATURE

STARMILLS

1 21
2 PERFECT CREATURE
3 INDIANA JONES
4 CARE GIVER
5 KUNG FU PANDA
6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

BACOLOD

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 INDIANA JONES
5 MEGA SNAKE
6 NEVER BACK DOWN

ILOILO

1 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 CARE GIVER
4 INDIANA JONES
5 THE SAVAGES
6 PERFECT CREATURE | MEGA SNAKE

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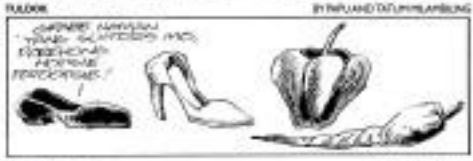

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Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

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3	7	5	6	4	2	8	9	1
8	3	4	9	6	1	5	7	2
9	1	2	5	7	3	4	8	6
6	5	7	8	2	4	9	1	3
7	2	1	4	9	5	3	6	8
4	8	9	1	3	6	2	5	7
5	6	3	2	8	7	1	4	9

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A superhero's dream girl

LOS ANGELES—THE 1980 newspaper, long-legged Charlize Theron glided into the room in an HD electronics suit dress, her curly blonde bob hair forming her beautiful face and carrying a Hollywood actress' best accessory three days—her pet dog.

The Mon-sized, award-winning actress is blooming. Voted last year as Esquire's "Sexiest Woman Alive," Theron epitomizes the glamour of old Hollywood.

This afternoon, the South African-turned-naturalized American citizen was talking to journalists about her new movie, "Hancock," an action-comedy where she portrays Mary Embrey, the wife of publicist Ray Embrey (Jason Bateman, "Juno"), and starring Will Smith as the reluctant superhero, John Hancock.

Directed by Peter Berg, "Hancock" is the story of a lazy, alcoholic, hard-living superhero. He has fallen out of favor with the public and tries to repair his image by hiring his own publicist. But he enters into a relationship with the PR professional's wife.

Theron, who was not afraid to look plain-faced in multiple unglamorous as-we-filed roles (Aileen Wuornos in her Academy Award- and Golden Globe-winning performance in "Monster," is also barely made-up for her role in the publicity stills in "Hancock."

"I don't even think of it as looking bad," Theron explained her simple look. "I think it's just looking authentic. I want to feel authentic as an actress. I would feel so uncomfortable if I did not feel like that would."

Despite her ultra feminine looks and curves, Theron, 32, is known in the entertainment circle as an actress who can hold her own among the boys. "I have a penis," she quipped. "I play with the rest of them. We all have such other. I worked with Will right years ago on the Robert Redford film 'The Legend of Bagger Vance' and with Peter on 'Arrested Development.' We go to the same mental shows. We all kind of came together but we ith like we were together for years."

Asked if she ever read comic books, Theron replied: "I didn't grow up with that genre. I did not have brothers. I grew up on a farm in Benoni, South Africa so I did not really read comic books or anything like that. I had to discover it in the later years."

Kiss and tell

Since the past trailers were only shown a 40 minutes of the film, we inquired whether she got to kiss Will Smith.

Theron smiled and said, "You should ask Will if he got to kiss me!"

Then she teased, "I might die at the end. We bring and then I die. So the movie ended with "We died but we parted ways." Give them another 10 endless dollars to direct that. Let me see if Will is happy with that."

Of superhero films, Charlize said: "I think it's a genre that's loved and completely respected. In that movie, they evolve each time. So it's a perfect time to be interesting. Coming from someone who did not grow up with comics and superheroes, I like that a lot. I like the human qualities of Hancock. He's broody, he's an alcoholic and he likes to grab girls' asses."

Theron admitted that she enjoys doing comedies now.

On her beauty secret, she disclosed: "There is no mystery. You have to eat healthy, you have to drink water. If you are happy in your life, it shows... You cannot go through your life worrying so much because it will get in the way."

Very much at home

Now that she is based in Los Angeles, does she consider it her personal home? "I have lived half of my life in South Africa and half here in LA," she replied. "I feel very much at home here. I like it here. That is the biggest reason I wanted to become a citizen. I also have a very clear opinion about how I lived in America. And the way I speak out because I am passionate. I'm excited in my life to vote for someone who can change our country and the world."

An outspoken Barack Obama supporter, Theron revealed, "I think everyone knows I am backing him up because he's incredible. I mean going to vote for a woman just because she is a woman, I don't like. I like [Charlize] would want me to vote for her just because she's a woman."

She continued, "I think people are always so shocked when actors speak out. My political views come out within the last 10 years. What has happened in the last 100 days is very impressive from what has happened in the last eight years. I am very comfortable with talking about that stuff. I love history in general."

Rajagha

CHARLIZE Theron appears in the action-comedy movie "Hancock," which also stars Will Smith and Jason Bateman.

HIP! Left to right, Sarah Jessica Parker, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis.

Stars need to go beyond their comfort zones

IT'S TOUGH DOING IT AS A SHOW on non-New Yorkers will to keeping a network cannot going for years, or even decades. Toughest of all, however, is the challenge of preventing a previously high-flying career from crashing once an eclectic photo-of-excessive caution, and smugly resting on one's laurels.

Those whose careers are on a successive plateau are still popular, and continue to make a lot of money. But their relative lack of artistic initiative ends up subverting their talent and makes them appear demeaning in a production of the profession.

The initial tendency is to dismiss these phrases-abducting stars as artists who've compromised their artistry in favor of comfortable "superstar" characterization and commercial and financial security. If that's the way they want them to perceive themselves, so be it.

On the other hand, this is cause for concern, because creations stars' "safe" performances ultimately dilute their hard-earned reputations, and leave the viewing public with unexciting and uninspiring fare. The culturally astute encourage us who pay good money to watch them. Even "Sex" TV doesn't do viewers a favor either, with its generally predictable performances.

Two popular and talented male stars who should reconsider their career options are Aga Muhlach and Piolo Pascual. They're both re-

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

claimed thespians, but they've been coming up with relatively safe TV/film performances of late.

Risks can save stars

In the movies, this is mainly due to flicks' fact that they've been pigeonholed into top billing romantic-comedy productions. This romcom format isn't known for coming up with challenging characters for their male stars to portray, so they (established) end up repeating themselves, which Aga and Piolo are due to do.

To a sense, this is not their "fault." Years ago, Aga went out on a limb and played a dark, negative character on the big screen and his fans showed in droves that they're not ready for such material. Piolo has made similarly misguided forays that weren't money in the bank.

So, to help them get off that exclusive, comfortable plateau, their fans should do their share by supporting their more audacious efforts, if and when they choose to make them.

On the flipside, the instructive story is currently being told by Sharon Cuneta, who's starring in the challenging film, "Caregiver." For many years, Sharon also wore the relatively safe romantic-melodrama and romantic-comedy roots, in her new film about a Filipina caregiver in London is quite a stretch for her.

'Uncommercial' story

The instructive factor here, however, is that Sharon chose to do the advertising. Like Aga and Piolo, she has remained popular for many years, so she certainly doesn't need to prove anything to anybody.

But, she felt strongly enough about developing her talents... and using her stellar clout to effect the production of the movie's "uncommercial" story—that she risked this box-office risk.

That's why we hope that, contrary to most predictions, "Caregiver" turns out to be a hit, despite its uncompromising material. If that happens, Sharon shall have gotten the best of both worlds: Artistic achievement and financial rewards.

Even better, she could motivate other "platonic-dwellers" to emulate her beyond their stellar comfort zones to be of better service to their talents and the viewing public to which they owe the fame and fortune they've been enjoying for many years.

From great to okay 'Sex'

By Oliver H. Palumbarit
Contributor

A FEW YEARS AFTER THE SUCCESSful and satisfying conclusion of the groundbreaking HBO comedy "Sex and the City," Carrie and her gang of independent, stylish women return for a giddy silver screen reunion. It moves the characters forward, just like the television series did, but it's not as fresh as the seventh longtime fans with new romance and relationship milestones, even if there are some really amusing scene delicious.

The four friends have changed, but are reportedly acclimating to their new lives at 40 points where the movie essentially left off. Ex-columnist and author Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker) is making big plans with her fiance Big (Chris Noth), once-critical lawyer Miranda (Cynthia Nixon) is now the perfect spouse and mom, formerly promiscuous PR girl Samantha (Kim Cattrall) continues her relationship with young actor-model Smith Jerrod (Jason Lewis).

Lively recap

A short but lively recap of the campy, quarter's history is woven into the opening credits, for those unfamiliar with their past TV lives. Of course, it'll be appreciated more by those with a broader knowledge of the show. The film is fun-pleasing enough that some flaws can be overlooked, the sessions certainly past the screen and onto the dressers. The big-screen jump is rom, but fully handled by Michael Patrick King, who directed and co-wrote the HBO episodes years ago.

The movie engages just like the TV series, where the frankness's clumsiness provide oldfavour angles on a particular intimacy subject per week. These different, demonstrably connected experiences still keep things from seeming somewhat. While a look like something an extended ac...or the equivalent of a marathon of seven 22-minute episodes, the movie doesn't suffer as many subjects as its TV precursor excellently and concisely did. Some parts feel underdeveloped and padded, even when the story takes place within the space of several months.

Still, the story lines this time exploit some conflicts Carrie experiences a drip in of her trademark past with Big. Samantha holds back regret for affect her man, and distress to herself by getting a busy pet. Miranda's partial disappointment is suddenly challenged by her spouse's revelations. There isn't much going on with Charlotte, but she gets the chance to be Ike-esque rebel in some kind and contrived situations. The comparisons to the show's heroic-esque stories are unavoidable, but you don't mind that much if you're a fan. There are a few things it does differently, though.

No smooth viewing

Carrie's given single characteristics: you see her change and come to big realizations, sometimes within the her own dependable and uncle-seeking voiceover narration. And Mr. Big is given enough of his own perspective that makes him less mysterious and even more prone to making boneheaded decisions.

It's In fact, smooth viewing, though. The richness of scenes are distracting; you'll get perplexed by the acting choices, and wonder what you missed. The mixed backdrops of several scenes or will make you squint and feel a little troubled.

"Sex and the City" tackles pretty much the same kinds and love issues as the series did now. They don't go the condition "Dream Girls Hollywood" route, but there's enough realistic post-dating drama that gets. Behind cut here, and while there is a noticeable absence of lovemaking, "Sex and the City" still reveals why it's been so much misunderstood. But search for happiness, and love, intimacy beyond the physical kind.

REVIEW

Wednesday night jazz at Merk's

MERK'S BAR BISTRO PRESENTS ITS "Midsummer Jazz Festival" sessions featuring Richard Shirk and Friends, with Judith Pascal joining on vocals and Peter Posadas on keyboards. Special guest is house area singer Bill.

Showtime is at 9 p.m. Call 757-4720 to 22.

SHOW TIME

Panic at the Disco live at the Big Dome

The American rock band Panic at the Disco performs on Aug. 14 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Formed in Las Vegas by childhood friends Ryan Ross (guitar) and Spencer Smith (drums), and later joined by Brendon Urie (vocals), the group has recorded two albums — "So Fresh, So Clean," "A Fever You Can't Sweat Out." And your playmates, with the hit single "I Write Sins, Not Tragedies" winning the Video of the Year at the 2006 MTV Awards.

Call 911-3333 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph.

Rage at UCC Park Cafe

Also performing tomorrow (and all Wednesdays of June) is the instrumental Rage at UCC Park Cafe, Ground, Makati. The band specializes in '80s music and is still fronted by its original founder vocalist, Monroe Darling.

Showtime is at 8:30 p.m. Call 818-7362.

Lettermen/Pat Upton back-to-back

The 1960s pop vocal group Lettermen and former Spiral Staircase lead singer Pat Upton return for a back-to-back concert on July 3 at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Lettermen have had 32 consecutive hits on the Billboard chart, 11 gold records and five Grammy nominations. Pat Upton is best known as the voice behind the band

SITTI

Statement signature song "Silent Today Tear Yesterday."

Tonight

Session Road at 7Th Bistro. Call 414-0107.

June 18

The Grounds, 8 p.m. at the PICC. Call 891-0000.

Air Supply at the Araneta Coliseum. Call 911-3333.

Aug. 1

Kris Lawsley at the Araneta Coliseum.

Remembering Daboy

"SILENCE is good and effective but not all the time," says Sunshine Cruz, here with husband Cesar Montano, on the nasty stories about her circulating online.

THE WEEKLY SHOW BIZ IN-country concerns the death of Emily Fernandez.

His discovery/mentor Dan Z. Dejardo remembers his first impression of Emily, then a 17-year-old college sophomore taking up Communication Arts in UP. "I first met Daboy in their house on E. Manuel St., San Juan, with his ate Marilu Dejardo. She also sang sometimes upon their college organization. Because there was a need of pursuading him, pursuing na rin."

Good thing Daboy changed his mind. He has left an indelible mark in showbiz biz. I still fondly remember how Daboy, every time we are each other, would make me shout his euphoric Mon Lin or BF during my GF days).

Thank you, Daboy, for those brief yet heartwarming moments. Bravo for a life well lived, second off cam!

On the warpath

JUST when I thought that Cesar Montano and Sunshine Cruz were on the verge of reconciling, there it is on the warpath again. She's mad at her almost-in-law Chad Daniel (or Gulp) for alleged. ly spreading nasty stories about her which supposedly her already volatile marriage.

"Sometimes silence is good and effective but not all the time," she says. "Especially if my kids are involved. I have done my part. I hope Cesar will do his part, too. I hope someone says some. thing to stop the rumors. I have to say my part ways for good. Ayoko'ng mga ganu'n. Chad pare pumilipit din siya kasi."

I tried to reach Chad via e-mail but for now she refuses to comment on the issue. Cesar is at a loss. "I love both Shaun and Chad. Nothing can ever change that. I don't believe any of the bad things said against my wife," he says. "They should both know their responsibility and not let personal grudges and differences get in the way."

Caught in the crossfire

GOT this text from Cesar's eldest daughter Angelica (born his ex-wife Lorna Tolentino) which also was forwarded to the family squabble:

"The gap in between Tita Chad and Ate Shaun. My Firstchest sa mom was used to ate feelings. I would not have allowed it to happen if I considered my Firstchest 24 hours. Maipit na lang si daddy, also at ang family ni dilfriends ni Tita Chad and Ate Shaun. Tita should not be happening, I love them both."

Friendster named Pretentious ate?

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

Fake preggy photos

TSB: SMS picked up my blind item about a young star who sent her fake preggy photos to Pinoy Big Brother host Phil Younghusband. They thought I was referring to Shaina Magdayao.

Oops! Mistaken identity! Although his lab manager Jayne Ramirez says Rhian also had some escapades with Phil, there's another mestiza young star who also has the hots for him. When she bumped into Phil at Fiesta, she grabbed his iPhone and stored her number in it using an alias.

Items like the football star has on the reasons to play the field.

French Film Fest

THE 12TH French Film Festival, to run from June 11 to 22 at the Shangri-La Plaza, is a celebration of love in its different aspects with films "Un Baiser s'il vous plait (Shall We Kiss?)," "Quelques jours en Automne (Love Songs)," "Qui est-ce? (Who's the Killer?)," "Ensemble, nous nous aimons (We love you, believe me)," "Mr. Vincent," "Faut le faire si tu veux pas (Shall We Kiss?)," "Cliente," "Romans de Gare (Crossed Tracks)," "Se Cela signifiait Vivre (Love Songs)" and "Mr. M. Hitch (Mr. Hitch wants a rich man)."

Lionel Mora "Trishie," which won a screenwriter's for the Cannes Filmfest and "Kwa Shaming," selected in the Directors' Fortnight, will also be shown. Plus the Oscar-winning performance of Marion Cotillard in "La Mome." Alliance au cinema! L'Amour nous jours forever!

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Top Asian superstars

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL continues its 10th year with the "2008 Top 10" countdown, which features Asian entertainment-loving viewers to vote for their favorite documentary.

Each program will be introduced by top celebrities from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines. Representing the Philippines are Christian Bautista, Dennis Trillo, Gary Valenciano and Kim Atienza.

The countdown runs until June 30, from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Greece feast

Discovery Travel & Living viewers will be satisfied as they travel the most beautiful and most significant landmarks and events in Greece by host and chef Barry Wiss.

Beginning June 23, episodes of "Taste Greece" air every Monday at 8 p.m. and encore every Sunday at 1 p.m.

Each week, Barry visits locations such as the beautiful mountain village of Aghiassos, Mount Olympus and Chios.

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